

THERON, and ASPASIO:

OR,

S E R I E S

OF

DIALOGUES

AND

LETTERS,

UPON THE

Most *Important* and *Interesting* Subjects.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

By JAMES HERVEY, A.M.

Rector of *Weston-Favell*, in *Northamptonshire*.

*The Memorial of thine abundant Kindness shall be shewed,
and Men shall sing of thy Righteousness. Psal. cxlv.7.*

VOL. I.

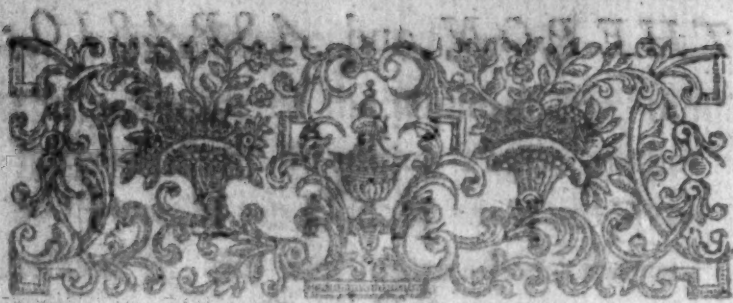
L O N D O N:

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DIALOGUES

L E T T E R S
Lady Frances Shirley.

IN THREE VOLUMES

MADAM'S REVIEW, A.M.

Christianity was inconsistent
with true Politeness, & pre-
judicial to real Happiness. I
should be extremely unjust

cross, and mercifully unjust, in
presenting these Essays to your Lady-
ship. But as the Religion of JESUS
is the grand Ornament of our Nature
and



The Right Honourable

Lady FRANCES SHIRLEY.

MADAM,

IF Christianity was inconsistent with true *Politeness*, or prejudicial to real *Happiness*, I should be extremely injudicious, and inexcusably ungrateful, in presenting these Essays to your LADYSHIP. But as the Religion of *JESUS* is the grand Ornament of our Nature,

IV DEDICATION.

and a Source of the sublimest Joy, the Purport of the following Pages, cannot be unworthy the Countenance and Protection of the *most accomplished* Person. Neither can there be a With, more suitable to the Obligations or the Dictates of a *grateful* Heart, than that You may experience what You read, and *be* what You patronize.

DID Religion consist in a *formal* Round of external Observances, or a *forced* Submission to some rigorous Austerities, I should not scruple to join with the Infidel and the Sensualist, to dread it in one View, and despise it in another. You need not be informed, MADAM, that it is as much superior to all such *low* and *forbidding* Singularities, as the Heavens are higher than the Earth. It is described by an Author, who learnt its Theory in the Regions of Paradise, and who displayed its Efficacy in his own most

D E D I C A T I O N

most exemplary Conversation.—It is thus described by that incomparable Author: *The Kingdom of GOD, is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the HOLY GHOST.*

To be reconciled to the Omnipotent GOD—To be interested in the unsearchable Riches of *CHRIST*—To be renewed in our Hearts, and influenced in our Lives, by the sanctifying Operations of the Divine *SPIRIT*—This is *evangelical* Righteousness. This is *genuine* Religion. This, *MADAM*, is the Kingdom of *GOD* established in the Soul.—How benign and inviting is such an Institution! How honourable and advantageous such a State! And from such Privileges, what other Effects can flow, but that *Peace, which passeth all Understanding?* That *Joy, which is unspeakable and glorious?*

most

ri DEDICATION.

Is there any Thing in the Amusements of the Gay and Pursuits of the Ambitious, of greater, of equal, of comparable Value? Is not all that *Wealth* can purchase, all that *Grandeur* can bestow, somewhat like those glittering Bubbles, which when viewed are *Emptiness*, when grasped are *Nothing*? Whereas, the Comforts, the Benefits, the Hopes of Christianity, are at once supremely excellent, and infinitely durable. A Portion, suited to the Dignity of a rational Soul; large as its Faculties, and immortal as its Being.

ALL these Blessings are centered in *CHRIST*; were purchased by *CHRIST*; are communicated from *CHRIST*.—

It is for want of knowing those boundless and everlasting Treasures of *pardon-
ing, justifying, saving* Merit, which the *LORD JESUS CHRIST* possesses,

and

DEDICATION. vii

and which He freely dispenses even to Sinners, that so many *unbinking* Persons are attached to ignoble Objects, and beguiled by delusory Pleasures. *Unhappy* Creatures! What can they do, but catch at Shadows, and stoop to Trifles, while they are ignorant of the grand, the substantial, the exalted Good?—It is for want of duly attending to that Fulness of Grace, and that Plenteousness of Redemption, which dwell in our most adorable SAVIOUR, that so many *serious* Persons are Strangers to the Tranquility and Sweetness of Religion: are subject to all its Restraints, but enjoy few, if any, of its Delights. *Mistaken* Zealots! How can they avoid the gloomy Situation and the uncomfortable Circumstance, so long as they withdraw themselves from the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS and his all-cheering Beams?

DEDICATION

May your Faith, if not constant
under his heavenly Light and Healing
Wings! Be more fully assured of his dy-
ing Love, and have brighter, still brighter
Manifestations of his immense Perfec-
tions! By these delightful Views, and by
that precious Faith, may your Heart be
transformed into his *holy*, his *amiable*, his
divine Image! Your Happiness will then
be just such as is wished, but far greater
than can be expressed by,

M A D A M,

Your most obliged, and

Most obedient humble Servant,

Westm. Ravell,

Jan. 6. 1785.

JAMES HERVEY.



ing Love, and have higher, till brighter
 Manifestations of his immense Perfec-
 tions! By these delightful Views, and by
 that precious Faith, may your Heart be
 transformed into his, and his will then
 become Image! Your Hopes will then
 be just such as is wished, but far greater

P R E F A C E.



THE Reader will probably expect
 some Account of the ensuing Work;
 and, to gratify Him in this Par-
 ticular, will be a real Pleasure to
 to the Author.

The Beauty and Excellency of the Scriptures
—The Ruin and Depravity of human Nature
—Its happy Recovery, founded on the Atonement, and effected by the SPIRIT of CHRIST
—These are some of the chief Points, vindicated, illustrated, and applied in the following Sheets.—But the grand Article, that which makes the principal Figure, is the IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS of our divine LORD; from whence arises our Justification before GOD, and our renewed Title to every heavenly Blessing.

P R E F A C E.

Long and an Article, which, though eminent for its Importance, seems to be little understood, and less regarded; if not much mistaken, and almost forgotten.

The Dignity and Importance of this great evangelical Doctrine—how worthy it is of the most attentive Consideration, and of universal Acceptance—is hinted in the second Dialogue. So that I need, in this Place, do nothing more, than give the Sense of a Passage from Wittius, which is there introduced in the Notes.—“The Doctrine of Justification, says that excellent Author, spreads itself through the whole System of Divinity. As this is either solidly established, or superficially touched; fully stated, or slightly dismissed; accordingly, the whole Structure of Religion, either rises graceful and magnificent, superior to Assault, and beyond the Power of Decay; or else it appears disproportionate and defective, totters on its Foundation, and threatens an opprobrious Fall *.”

The Design is executed in the Form of Dialogue. Those Parts only excepted, in which it was not easy to carry on a Conversation, and assign to each Person a proper Degree of Significance. Here, to avoid the common Imputation, of bringing upon the Stage a Mute or a Shadow

• See p. 59.

P R E F A C E. xi

Shadow—one who fights without Weapons, and submits without a Contest—the Scene shifts. Our Gentlemen separate; and, instead of conversing, enter upon an epistolary Correspondence.

The Dialogue Form seems, on many Considerations, a very eligible Way of Writing.—Hereby, the Author gives an Air both of Dignity and of Modesty to his Sentiments. Of Dignity; by delivering them from the Mouths of Persons, in every respect superior to Himself. Of Modesty; because We no longer consider Him in the raised, but invidious Capacity of a Teacher. Instead of calling Us to his Feet, and dictating his Precepts, He gratifies our Curiosity. He turns back a Curtain, and admits Us to some remarkable Interviews, or interesting Conferences. We over-hear, by a kind of innocent or imaginary Stealth, the Debates which pass in the Recesses of Privacy; which are carried on, with the most unreserved Freedom of Speech, and Openness of Heart.—A Circumstance, which will apologize for some Peculiarities, that might otherwise be inconsistent with Humility, or offensive to Delicacy. Particularly, it may obviate the Disgust, which generally, and indeed deservedly, attends the frequent Intrusion of that ambitious and usurping little Monosyllable, I.

The Names of the Persons are prefixed, each to his respective Share of the Discourse, in Imitation of Cicero, and for the Reasons which he assigns. Quasi enim ipsos induxi loquentes: ne Inquam & Inquit sæpius interponerentur. Atque id eo feci, ut tanquam præsentibus coram haberi Sermo videretur*. This Method, He very justly intimates, is removed farthest from the Narrative, and makes the nearest Approaches to Life and Reality. It quite secretes the Author; and, by introducing the Persons themselves, renders all that passes intirely their own.—It prevents likewise the Repetition of those Interlocutory Words, He said, He replied. Which, unless the Speeches are very long, must frequently recur, and have no pleasing Effect upon the Ear. And if the Speeches are long, the Spirit of Conversation is lost. The Associates are no longer talking; but one of them, or the Author, is lecturing.

Though I have so much to say in Behalf of the Model, I have very little to say with regard to the Execution—unless it be to confess the Deficiency. There is not, I am sensible, that peculiar Air and distinguishing Turn, which should mark and characterize each Speaker. This is what the Nature of finished Dialogue requires, and what the Author applauds

* De Amicitia.

plauds in some very superior Writers. But, not having the Ability to copy it, He has not the Vanity to affect it. — Nevertheless, the attentive Reader will, all along, perceive a Difference in the Sentiment, if not in the Language. The Materials vary, even when they run into the same Mould, and take the same Form. — In the Diction also there must be some Diversity. Because, several of the Objections are proposed in the very Words of one or two eminent Writers, who have appeared on the other Side of the Question. These are not particularized by the Mark of Quotation; because, the Man of Reading will have no Occasion for the Assistance of such an Index, and the Man of Taste will probably discern them by the Singularity of the Style.

Some of the following Pieces, it must be acknowledged, are of the controversial Kind. A species of Writing, least susceptible of the Graces, which embellish Composition; or rather most destitute of the Attractives, which engage Attention, and create Delight. — Yet I have sometimes thought, that it is not absolutely impossible, to make even the stern Face of Controversy wear a Smile; and to reap some valuable Fruit, from the rugged Furrows of Disputation. Whether this is effected in the present Work, the Public must judge; that it has been attempted,

tempted, the Author may be permitted to declare.

To soften the Asperities of Argument, Views of Nature are interspersed. That, if the former should carry the Appearance of a rude intangled Forest, or of a frowning gloomy Recess, there may be some agreeable Openings, and lightsome Avenues, to admit a Prospect of the Country: which is always arrayed in Charms, and never fails to please.

The Author confesses a very peculiar Fondness for the amiable Scenes of Creation. It is therefore not at all improbable, but his Excursions on this Topic may be of the diffusive Kind, and his Descriptions somewhat luxuriant. It is hoped, however, that the benevolent Reader will indulge Him in this favourite Foible.— If any should feel the same prevailing Passion for the Beauties of Nature, 'tis possible these Persons may be inclined, not only to excuse, but approve the Fault; and take Part with the Lover, even in Opposition to the Critic.

Farther to diversify the Piece, Sketches of Philosophy are introduced. Easy to be understood, and calculated to entertain the Imagination, as well as to improve the Heart. More particularly, to display the wise and beneficent Design of Providence, in the various Appearances and numberless Productions of the material

World

P R E F A C E.

xv

World. Neither are these Remarks altogether foreign to the main Point. But, as far as the Wonders of Creation may comport with the Riches of Grace, subserve the general End.

As to the Choice of my Subjects—Some People have desired to see an *Invective*, against the fashionable and predominant Vices of the Age. This I apprehend, would be like picking off the Leaves, or clipping away the Twigs, of some over-grown and noxious Tree. Waving this tedious and ineffectual Toil, I would rather lay my *Axe* to the Root. Let the Knowledge and Love of CHRIST take place in the Heart, and not only a few of the Branches, but the whole Body of Sin will fall at once.

Some would have the Author insist upon the conscientious Observation of the Sabbath, inculcate the daily Worship of GOD in the Family, and urge a devout Attendance on the public Ordinances of Religion.—But when a Person is convinced of Sin, and made sensible of Misery; when he has tasted the good Word of GOD*, and seen by Faith the LORD's CHRIST†; He will want no Solicitation or Incitement, to these Means of Grace, and Exercises of Godliness. He will have just the same Disposition to them all, as the hungry Appetite has to whole-

* Heb. vi. 5.

† Luke ii. 25.

some Food, or the new-born Babe to the Milk of the Breast.*

Others may imagine, that I have neglected the Interests of Morality; because, here is no professed Attempt to delineate its Duties, or inforce its Practice.—Let these Persons remember, that Morality never makes such vigorous Shoots, never produces such generous Fruit, as when ingrafted on evangelical Principles.—And if I do not crop the Pink, the Rose, and the Carnation; if I do not gather the Peach, the Nectarine, and the Pine-Apple; and put them into my Reader's Hand, for his immediate Enjoyment: I am endeavouring to sow the Seeds, and plant the Roots in his Garden; which, if cherished by the favourable Influence of Heaven, will yield Him, not an occasional, but a constant Supply of all.

As

* 1 Pet. ii. 2. This Comparison is, perhaps, the most exact and expressive, that Words can form, or Fancy conceive. Babes covet nothing but the Milk of the Breast. They are indifferent about all other Things. Give them Riches, give them Honours, give them whatever you please, without this rich, delicious, balmy Nutriment, they will not, they cannot be satisfied.—How finely does this illustrate, and how forcibly inculcate, what our LORD styles, *The single Eye*, and *The One Thing needful*! Or, the salutary Doctrines, and delightful Privileges of the Gospel; together with that supreme Value for them, and undivided Complacency in them, which are the distinguishing Character of the Christian!

P R E F A C E. xvii

As several Texts of Scripture come under Consideration, Criticisms upon the Original are frequently subjoined. In order to clear up some Difficulties, to rectify some Mistranslations, or point out the many delicate and masterly Strokes, which occur in the BIBLE.—And glad should I be, extremely glad, if I might recommend and endear that invaluable Book. If, as the divine REDEEMER rideth on in the Word of Truth, of Meekness, and Righteousness, this Hand might scatter a Palm Branch, or this Performance might lie as a Flowret, to strewn his Way†, and solemnize his Triumph.*

In the Course of the Disputation, I dare not suppose, that I have discussed all the Arguments, which Sagacity may devise, or Sophistry urge. Perhaps, I have not removed all the Scruples, which may awaken Prejudice, or embarrass Integrity. This, however, I may venture to affirm, that I myself have met with no considerable Objection, which is not either expressly answered, or virtually refuted, in these Conferences.—And, though I should neither satisfy nor silence the Gainsayer, I shall think my Endeavours happily employed, if they may throw Light upon the dim Apprehension, establish the wavering Faith, or comfort the afflicted Conscience.

VOL. I.

a

If

* Psal. xlv. 4.

† Alluding to Matt. xxi. 8.

If any should burlesque or ridicule these venerable Truths, and exalted Privileges, I shall only say with my Divine MASTER; O! that Thou hadst known, in this thy Day, the Things that belong to thy Peace! But now they are hid, it is evident from such a Procedure, they are hid from thine Eyes*.

Should any, in the Spirit of Decency and Candor, either start new, or revive old Objections, I doubt not, but they will receive both a due Examination and a proper Reply. As these Doctrines enter into the very Essence of the Gospel, and constitute the Glory of our Religion, they can never want a Succession of Advocates, so long as the Sun and Moon endure.—For my own Part, I must beg Leave to retire from the Lists, and lay down the Weapons of Controversy. Virgil's Language is my Resolution;

*Discedam, explebo Numerum, reddarque
Tenebris.*

This Declaration is made, not from any the least Suspicion, that my Tenets are indefensible. But because I would apprise my Friends, and the Friends of our common Christianity, that the Field is clear and open for them to advance; that I resign to others the glorious

Com-

* Luke xix. 42.

P R E F A C E. iii

Combat; and shall content myself with wishing them Success in the Name of the L O R D. Because, it becomes a Person in my declining State, to be more peculiarly intent upon encountering a different Adversary, who is sure to overcome, and never allows Quarter. Yet, by this Word of my Testimony, and by the Blood of the L A M B*, I hope to triumph even when I fall; and to be more than a Conqueror, through J E H O V A H my Righteousness.

Should any Thing be urged, forcible enough to overthrow my Arguments, or detect a Mistake in my Sentiments, the World may depend upon seeing a free and undissembled Retraction. I shall look upon it as a Duty, which I owe to my Conscience, to my Readers, and to my G O D, publickly to acknowledge the Error. —It is one Thing to be silent; another to be obstinate. As I shall inflexibly adhere to the first; I would, with equal Steadiness, renounce the last. Though I withdraw from the Strife of Pens and of Tongues, I shall take care to preserve a Mind, ever accessible to Truth, ever open to Conviction. A Mind, infinitely more concerned for the Purity and Prosperity of the everlasting Gospel, than for the Prevalence of

XXXX P R E F A C E . I

my own Opinion, for the Credit of my own Performance. *As I have the Happiness of being a Member, and the Honour of being a Minister, of the reformed established Church: I cannot but rejoice, with a peculiar Pleasure, that every Doctrine of Note, maintained in these Dialogues and Letters, is either implied in our Liturgy, asserted in our Articles, or taught in our Homilies.—It affords me likewise some Degree of Satisfaction to observe, that the most material of the Sentiments, have been adopted by Milton; are incorporated into his Paradise Lost; and add Dignity to the sublimest Poem in the World.—To have the highest Authority, and the first Genius of the Nation on a Writer's Side, is no contemptible Support. This must surely give a Sanction, where ever our religious Establishment is revered, or polite Literature is held in Repute. Yet even this Sanction, compared with the Oracle of Revelation, is only like a Range of Cyphers, connected with the initial Figure. Which, were they detached, would be insignificant; but, in such a Subordination, are considerable.*

Perhaps, it should be farther acknowledged, that I have not always confined myself to the Method of our Systematic Writers, nor followed their Train of Thoughts with a scrupulous Regulation.

gularly, now I would conduct my Fellow-creature
to the supreme and eternal Good, CHRIST
JESUS. I have chosen the Path, which
seemed most agreeable and inviting, rather than
most beaten and frequented. If this leads, with
equal Certainty, to the great and desirable End,
I dare promise myself an easy Excuse. — However,
that Method and Order, in the doctrinal Parts
of the Plan, are not wholly neglected, the follow-
ing Summary of Contents may shew.



Perhaps, it should be farther acknowledged,
that I have not always confined myself to the
Method of our Systematic Writers, nor followed
their Train of Thoughts with a scrupulous Re-
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SERIES

OF

DIALOGUES.



DIALOGUE I.



HERON, was a Gentleman of fine Taste; of accurate, rather than extensive Reading; and particularly charmed with the Study of Nature. He traced the Planets in their Courses, and examined the Formation of the meanest Vegetable; not merely to gratify a *refined* Curiosity, but chiefly to cultivate the *nobler* Principles of Religion and Morality. Several Discoveries He made, and every Discovery He improved, to this important End—to raise in his Mind, more *exalted* Apprehensions of the Supreme Being—and to enlarge his Affections, with a *disinterested* Benevolence; conformable, in some Degree, to that boundless Liberality, which pervades and animates the whole Creation.

VOL. I.

B

ASPASIO,

2 DIALOGUE I.

ASPASIO, was not without his Share of polite Literature, and philosophical Knowledge. He had taken a Tour through the Circle of the Sciences; and, having transiently surveyed the Productions of human Learning, devoted his final Attention to the inspired Writings. These He studied, with the unbiassed Impartiality of a Critic; yet with the reverential Simplicity of a Christian. These He regarded, as the *unerring* Standard of Duty—the *authentic* Character of Salvation—and the *brightest* Mirror of the Deity; affording the most satisfactory and sublime Display of all the divine Attributes.

Theron, was somewhat *warm* in his Temper; and would, upon Occasion, make Use of a little innocent Rallery; not to expose his Friend, but to enliven the Conversation. Sometimes *disguising* his real Sentiments; in order to sift the Subject, or discover the Opinion of others. — *Aspasio* seldom indulges the humorous or satyrical Vein, but argues with *Meekness of Wisdom* *. Never puts on the Appearance of Guile, but always speaks the Dictates of his Heart.

Aspasio was on a Visit at *Theron's* Seat. — One Evening, when some neighbouring Gentlemen were just gone, and had left them alone, the Conversation took the following Turn.

Asp. — I would always be ready, both to acknowledge and applaud, whatever is amiable in the Con-

* ————— *Mittis Sapientia Leli.* H O R.

Is a most amiable Character, and delicately drawn. But is, I think, expressed with greater Strength, and superior Beauty, by the sacred Penman; *Let Him shew out of a good Conversation his Works with Meekness of Wisdom.* Jam. iii. 13.

duct

DIALOGUE I. 3

duct of Others. The Gentlemen, who gave Us their Company at Dinner, seem to be all of a *different* Character. Yet each, in his own Way, is extremely agreeable.

Lyfander has lively Parts, and is quick at Repartee. But He never abuses his Wit, to create Uneasiness in the honest Heart, or flush the modest Cheek with Confusion.—What Solidity of Judgment, and Depth of Penetration, appear in *Crito* ! Yet, how free are his Discourses, from the magisterial Tone, or the dictatorial Solemnity ! — *Philenor*'s Taste in the polite Arts, is remarkably correct : yet, without the least Tincture of Vanity, or any weak Fondness for Applause. He never interrupts the Progress, or wrests the Topic of Conversation ; in order to shine in his particular Province.—*Trebonius*, I find, has signalized his Valour, in several Campaigns. Though a Warrior and a Traveler, He gives Himself no overbearing or ostentatious Airs. In *Trebonius*, You see the brave Officer, regulated by all the Decency of the Academic, and sweetened with all the Affability of the Courtier.

No one affects a *morose* Silence, or assumes an *immoderate* Loquacity *. To engross the Talk, is tyrannical : to seal up the Lips, is monkish. Every one, therefore, from a Fund of good Sense, contributes his Quota : and each speaks, not with an Ambition to

* *Zeno* being present, where a Person of this loquacious Disposition played Himself off, said, with an Air of Concern in his Countenance ; *That poor Gentleman is ill, He has a violent Flux upon Him.* The Company was alarmed, and the Rhetorician stopped in his Career. *Yes* ; added the Philosopher, *the Flux is so violent, that it has carried his Ears into his Tongue.*

set off Himself, but from a Desire to please the Company.

Ther. Indeed, *Aspasio*, I think myself happy, in this accomplished Set of Acquaintance. Who add all the Complaisance and Politeness of the Gentleman, to the Benevolence and Fidelity of the Friend.

Their Conversation is as innocent, as their Taste is refined.—They have a noble Abhorrence of *Slander*, and detest the low ungenerous Artifices of *Detraction*.—No loose Jest, has either the Service of their Tongue, or the Sanction of their Smile. Was You to be with them, even in their freest Moments; You would hear Nothing, that borders upon *Profaneness*, or is in the least injurious to *Purity* of Morals.

Asp. There is but one Qualification wanting, to render your Friends completely valuable; and their social Interviews a continual Blessing.

Ther. Pray, what is that?

Asp. A Turn for more serious Conferences.—Their literary Debates are beautiful Sketches, of whatever is most curious in the Sciences, or most delicate in the Arts. From their Remarks on our national Affairs, and on foreign Occurrences, a Person may almost form a System of Politics.—But, they never touch upon any Topic of *Morality*; never celebrate the sublime Perfections of the Deity; never illustrate the Beauties, nor enforce the Truths—

Ther. Fie upon You, *Aspasio*, for your unpolite Hint! Who can forbear interrupting an Harangue, that pleads for such an outrageous Violation of the Mode? Would introduce *edifying* Talk into our fashionable Assemblies!—How is it that You, who, in other Instances, are a Gentleman of Refinement, can be so strangely inelegant in this Particular?

DIALOGUE I. 5

Asp. For such a Practice, *Theron*, We have no inconsiderable Precedents. — Thus *Socrates* *, the wisest of the *Athenian* Sages, thus *Scipio* †, the most accomplished of the *Roman* Generals, conversed. — Thus *Cicero* ‡, the Prince of Orators, improved his elegant Retirement at the *Tusculan* Villa. — And *Horace* ||, the brightest Genius in the Court of *Augustus*, formed the most agreeable Hours of his Conversation, upon this very Plan.

Was I to enumerate all the Patrons of this, forgive me if I say, *more honourable* Mode; the most illustrious Names of Antiquity, would appear on the List.

Ther. This Practice, however extolled by the philosophic Gentry of ancient Times; would make a very singular Figure, in the present Age.

Asp. And should not the Copy, after which the Generality of Mankind write, be singularly correct? Persons of exalted Fortune, are the Pattern for general Imitation: are the Copy, in Conformity to which, the inferior World adjust their Manners, and regulate their Behaviour. They, therefore, are under the strongest Obligations, not to give a contemptible Stamp to the Fashion. — Benevolence to their Fellow-crea-

* Vid. *Socratis Memorabilia*, per *Xenoph.*

† See *Cicero's* Dialogue *De Amicitia*. In which we are informed, That it was a customary Practice with *Scipio*, with his polite Friend *Laelius*, and some of the most distinguished Nobility of *Rome*, to discourse upon the Interests of the Republic, and Immortality of the Soul.

‡ Vid. *Tuscul. Quest.*

|| Such were the Interviews, of which he speaks with a Kind of Rapture,

O Noctes Cœnæque Delin!

tures calls loudly upon them, a Concern for the public Good challenges it at their Hands, that *they* signalize themselves by a Pre-eminence in all that is excellent.

Ther. Away, away with these *austere* Notions! Such a Strain of Conversation, would *damp* the Gaiety of our Spirits, and *flatten* the Relish of Society. It would turn the Assembly into a Conventicle, and make it Lent all the Year round.

Ass. Can it then be an austere Practice, to cultivate the Understanding, and improve the Heart?—Can it damp the Gaiety of our Spirits, to refine them upon the Plan of the highest Perfection?—Or, will it flatten the Relish of Society, to secure and anticipate everlasting Delights?

Ther. *Everlasting Delights, Assasio!*—To talk of such a Subject, would be termed, in every Circle of Wit and Gallantry, an Usurpation of the Parson's Office. A *low* Method, of retailing by Scraps, in the Parlour; what the Man in Black, vends by wholesale, from the Pulpit.—It would infallibly mark Us out for *Pedants*. And, for aught I know, might expose Us to the Suspicion of *Enthusiasm*.

Ass. Your Men of Wit must excuse me, if I cannot persuade myself to admire, either the *Delicacy* of their Language, or the *Justness* of their Opinion.

The first, be it ever so *humane* and *graceful*, I resign to themselves.—As to the other, I would beg Leave to inquire; “Are the Clergy, then, the *only* Persons, who should act the *becoming* Part, and converse like *rational* Beings? Is solid Wisdom, and sacred Truth, the Privilege of their Order? While nothing is left for You and me, but the Play of Fancy, or the Luxuries of Sense.”

DIALOGUE I.

I would farther ask the Circles of Gallantry;
 “ Where is the Impropriety, of interweaving the *noble*
 “ Doctrines, displayed by the Preacher, with our
 “ common Discourse? Or, what the Inconvenience,
 “ of introducing the *amiable* Graces, recommended
 “ by his Lectures, into ordinary Practice?”

Will *such* an Exercise of our Speech, rank Us
 among Pedants? Is *this* the Badge of Enthusiasm?
 A splendid and honourable Badge truly! Such as
 must add Weight to any Cause, and Worth to any
 Character.

Ther. This would curb the sprightly Sallies of
Wit; and extinguish that engaging Glow of *Good-*
humour, which enlivens our genteel Intercourses.
 Accordingly, You may observe, that if any *formal*
Creature, takes upon Him to mention, in polite Com-
 pany, a religious Truth, or a Text of Scripture; the
 pretty Chat, though ever so profusely flowing, stag-
 nates in an Instant. Each voluble and facetious
 Tongue seems to be struck with a sudden Palsy.
 Every one wonders at the strange Man’s Face; and
 they all conclude Him, either *mad*, or a *Methodist*.

Asp. Agreeable Strokes of Wit, are by no Means
 incompatible with useful Conversation. Unless we
 mistake an *insipid* Vivacity, or *fantastic* Levity, for
 Wit and Facetiousness.—Neither have I heard, that,
 among all our Acts of Parliament, any one has passed
 to *divorce* Good Sense and Good-humour. Why
 may they not both reside on the same Lips, and
 both circulate through the same Assembly?—For my
 own Part, I would neither have our Discourse *soured*
 with Austerity, nor *evaporate* into Impertinence: but
 unite (as a judicious Antient advises) the Benefits of

Improvement, with the Blandishments of Pleasantry*.—And as to your polite People; if they can find more Music, in the *Maggie's* Voice, than in the *Nightingale's* Note; I must own myself as much surprised at *their* Ears, as they are at the strange Man's Face.

Ther. With all your grey-headed Authorities, I fancy, You will find very few Profelytes, among the Professors of modern Refinement. *Fashion* is, with the World, the Standard of Morals, as well as of Clothes. And He must be of a very *peculiar* Turn indeed, who would choose to be ridiculous in either.

Asp. Rather, *Theron*, He must be of a very *pliant* Turn, who tamely delivers up his Conduct, to be moulded by a Fashion; which has neither true Elegance to dignify it, nor the least Usefulness to recommend it.

And which, I beseech You, is most ridiculous?—He, who servilely imitates every *idle* Fashion, and is the very *Ape* of corrupt Custom?—Or He, who asserts his native Liberty; and resolutely follows, where *Wisdom* and *Truth* lead the Way.

Ther. Would you then obtrude religious Discourse, upon every Company? Consider, *Aspasio*, what a motley Figure this would make.—A Wedding, and a Sermon!—Quadrille, and *St. Paul*!—The last new Play, and primitive Christianity!

Asp. You know the Rule, *Theron*, which is given by the great "Master of our Assemblies;" *Cast not your Pearls before Swine*†. Some there are, so immersed in Sensuality, that they can relish nothing,

* *Cum quadam Illecebra ac Voluptate vitæ.* [Aul. Gel.]

† Matt. vii. 6.

DIALOGUE I. 9

but the coarsest Husks of Conversation. To these, neither offer your Pearls, nor prostitute your Intimacy.

But, when Persons of a liberal Education, and elevated Sentiments—when *these* meet together; why should not their Discourse be suitable, to the Eminence of their Rank, and the Superiority of their Genius? Raised, far above the Level of that *trite* and *effeminate* Strain—“ Upon my Honour, the Actress topt her Part. Heavens! How charmingly she sung! How gracefully she trod the Stage!”

Ther. Indeed, my *Aspasio*, I am intirely in your Way of Thinking; however I have hitherto put on the Mask.—The Gift of Speech, is one great Prerogative of our rational Nature. And 'tis Pity, that such a superior Faculty, should be debased to the meanest Purposes.

Suppose, all our stately Vessels, that pass and repass the Ocean, were to carry out nothing but Tinsel, and theatrical Decorations; were to import nothing but glittering Baubles, and nicely-fansied Toys. Would such a Method of Trading, be well-judged in itself, or beneficial in its Consequences?—Articulate Speech, is the Instrument of a much nobler Commerce; intended to transmit and diffuse the Treasures of the Mind. And will not the Practice be altogether *as injudicious*, must not the Issue be infinitely *more detrimental*, if this Vehicle of intellectual Wealth, is freighted only with *pleasing Fopperies*?

Ass. Such Folly and Extravagance, would be banished out of the *commercial* World. Why then are they admitted and cherished in the *social*?

Ther.

Ther. Why indeed? He must be far more acute than your *Theron*, who can assign a single Reason to countenance them. To explode them, ten thousand Arguments occur.—A continual Round of gay and trifling Conversation *, of Visits quite modish and Entertainments not moral, must give an indolent Turn to the Mind. Such as will *enervate* its Powers; *indispose* it for generous Action; and gradually *sap* the very Foundation of Virtue.—Whereas, a frequent Conference on the Glories of the Godhead, or the Wonders of Creation, would invigorate and enoble the Soul. Would enlarge her Faculties, and elevate her Desires.

Asp. Did not our Hearts burn within us, said the Travelers at *Emmaus*, while *HE* talked with us by the Way †? Those Discourses, 'tis true, were conducted with a Spirit, and enforced with an Energy, absolutely unequalled. Yet, the same happy Effects would, in *some* inferior Degree, result from our friendly Conferences, if they turned upon the same important Points. We also should feel our Hearts, warmed with holy Zeal, and glowing with heavenly Love.

Ther. Such Conferences would not only be productive of *present* Advantage; but yield a renewed Pleasure, in the Retrospect. We might *reflect*, with real Complacency, on Hours spent in so rational a Manner. And who would not prefer the silent Applause of the Heart, to all those tumultuous Joys;

* The Significancy and Importance of such Conversation, was smartly represented by the Philosopher. Who, being asked, How he left the Company employed, made Answer; *Some in milking the Ram, Others in holding the Pail.*

† Luke xxiv. 32.

which

D I A L O G U E I. 11

which wanton Jests create, or the circling Glass inspires?

Asp. One*, who thoroughly knew Mankind, and had tried the Merits of the jovial Board, very pertinently compares such Flashes of Mirth, to the *Crackling of Thorns under a Pot* †. The transient Blaze of the One, and the senseless Noise of the Other, continue but for a Moment; and then expire, *that* in Smoke and Darkness, *this* in Spleen and Melancholy.

I said, *Spleen and Melancholy*.—For, however jauntier and alert the various Methods of modish Trifling may seem; whatever Ease and Grace they are supposed to give the Conversation; sure I am, it will be afflictive, to *look back* upon Interviews, squandered away in very Vanity; and shocking, to *look forward* upon the Account, which We must all shortly render.—What Figure will *such* an Article make, in the final Reckoning, and at the decisive Bar? “Our social Hours, which might have promoted our mutual Edification, and been subservient to our Creator’s Glory, all *lost* in Merriment and Whim; or *worse than lost*, in Flattery and Detraction. A *Blank*, or a *Blot*.”

Ther. Venus, we find, has her zealous Knight-Errants, and *Bacchus* his professed Votaries, in almost every Company. And is it not truly deplorable, that the GOD of Nature alone, has none to assert his Honour, none to celebrate his Perfections? Though He is the *Original* of all *Beauty*, and the *Parent* of all *Good*.

When I have taken my Morning Walk, amidst Dews and Flowers; with the Sun shedding Lustre

* King Solomon.

† Eccles. vii. 6.

round Him, and unveiling the happy Landscape; how has my Eye been charmed, with the lovely Prospect! How has my Ear been ravished, with the Music of the Grove! Methought, every Note was a *Tribute* of Harmony; and all Nature seemed one *grand Chorus*, swelling with the Creator's Praise.—But, how has the Scene been reversed; when, leaving my rural Elysium, I entered the Haunts of Men! Where I saw Faculties divine, meanly engaged in Trifles. Where I heard the Tongue, prompt to utter, and fluent to express, every Thing but its Maker's Glory.

I assure you, I have often been chagrined on this Occasion: and sometimes said within myself—"What! Shall *Trifles* be regarded, and the *Majesty* of Heaven neglected? Shall every Friend, and every Visitant, receive his Share of Respect? And no Acknowledgments be paid to that exalted Being, who is worthy, more than worthy, of all our Veneration?"

Ans. This will be still more afflictive to an ingenuous Mind, if we consider, That the infinite and glorious God is *present* at all our Interviews: vouchsafes to express his Satisfaction, and acknowledge Himself *magnified*; when, with Admiration and Love, We talk of his transcendent Excellencies.—Nay: We are assured, that the LORD of all Lords, not only hears, but keeps a *Book of Remembrance*; and will distinguish such Persons, at the Day of universal Retribution. When the loose Train of licentious Talkers, are driven away as the despicable *Chaff*; these shall be selected for his peculiar Treasure, and numbered among the *Jewels* of JEHOVAH*.

Ther.
* *Malach. iii. 16, 17.* This is a Passage, much to be observed. A most emphatical Recommendation of religious

DIALOGUE I. 13

Ther. If the Gentlemen, who make high Pretensions to Reason, think themselves discharged from these Doctrines of Revelation; they should not forget *their own Scriptures*.—A *Philosopher* will tell them the *Duty* of employing their Time, as in the awful Presence, and under the immediate Inspection, of the supreme Being*.—An *Orator* will shew them the egregious *Impropriety*, of wasting their friendly Interviews, in the Fumes of Drollery, or the Froth of Impertinence †.

Asp. Who then, that is wise, would not habituate Himself to a Practice; which comes recommended by the Voice of Reason, and is enforced by the Authority of God?—A Practice, which will administer *present Good*—will afford *pleasing Reviews*—and terminate in *everlasting Honour*?

Ther. 'Tis strange, that Subjects, which deserve to be received, as the universal Topic, are almost universally banished from our Discourse.—Was this Cabinet enriched, with a Series of antique *Medals*, or a Collection of the finest *Gems*; my Friends would naturally expect to be entertained, with a Sight of those Rarities, and an Explanation of their Meaning.

ligious Discourse! Perhaps, the most *emphatical*, that ever was used; and the most *endearing*, that can possibly be conceived.

* *Sic certe vivendum est, tanquam in Conspectu vivamus: sic cogitandum, tanquam aliquis in Pectus intimum inspicere possit: Et potest. Quid enim profit ab Homine aliquid esse secretum? Nihil Deo clausum est. Interest Animis nostris, Et Cogitationibus mediis intervenit.* Senec. Epist. 83.

† Cicero says, with an Air of graceful Indignation; *Quasi vero clarorum Virorum aut tacitos Congressus esse oporteat, aut ludicros Sermones, aut Rerum Colloquia leviorum.*

Academ. Quæst. Lib. IV.

Why

Why should we not as naturally expect, and as constantly agree, to entertain each other with Remarks on those *admirable Curiosities*, which are deposited in the boundless *Musæum** of the Universe?

When a *General* has won some important Victory, or an *Admiral* has destroyed the Enemy's Fleet; every Company resounds with their Atchievements; every Tongue is the Trumpet of their Fame. And why should We not celebrate, with equal Delight and Ardour, that *almighty Hand*; which formed the Structure, and furnished the Regions, of this stupendous System?

Asp. Especially, if to his *immensely glorious*, We add his *supremely amiable* Perfections.—When the victorious Commander is our most cordial Friend: when He has professed the tenderest Love; done Us the most signal Good; and promised Us a perpetual Enjoyment of his Favours; it will be impossible to neglect such an *illustrious* and *generous* Person. His Name must be engraven upon our Hearts; must slide insensibly into our Tongues; and be as Music to our Ears.

Is not all this true, and in the most super-eminent Degree, with regard to the blessed GOD?—Can greater *Kindness* be exercised, or greater *Love* be conceived; than to deliver up his own Son to Torments and Death, for the Expiation of our Sins?—Can *Benefits*, more desirable, be granted; than to adopt Us for his Children, and sanctify Us by his Spirit?—Can

* *Musæum*—Alluding to a remarkable Edifice in the City of *Oxford*, distinguished by this Name; and appropriated to the Reception of *Curiosities*, both natural and artificial.

D I A L O G U E I. 15

Promises, more invaluable, be made; than those, which insure to Us the Preferments of Heaven, and the Riches of Eternity?

All this is attested, concerning the Almighty Majesty, in the Scriptures of Truth. What a rich Fund, therefore, for refined Conversation, are *the Scriptures*!

Ther Here also I have the Pleasure, to concur with my *Aspasio*. Though I believe, He suspects me to be somewhat wavering or defective, in my Veneration for the Scriptures.

Asp. No, *Theron*: I have a better Opinion of your Taste and Discernment, than to harbour any such Suspicion.

Ther. The Scriptures are certainly an inexhaustible Fund of Materials, for the most delightful and ennobling Discourse. When We consider the Author of those sacred Books—that they came originally from *Heaven*—were dictated by *divine* Wisdom—have the same *consummate* Excellence, as the Works of Creation—It is really surprising, that We are not always searching, by Study, by Meditation, or Converse, into one or other of those grand Volumes.

Asp. When *Secker* preaches, or *Murray* pleads; the Church is crowded, and the Bar thronged. When *Spence* produces the Refinements of Criticism, or *Young* displays the Graces of Poetry; the Press toils, yet is scarce able to supply the Demands of the Public. —Are We *eager* to hear, and *impatient* to purchase, what proceeds from such eloquent Tongues, and masterly Pens? And can We be *coldly indifferent*, when—not the most accomplished of Mankind—not the most exalted of Creatures—but the adorable Author of all Wisdom, speaks in his revealed Word?

Strange! that our Attention does not hang * upon the venerable Accents, and our Talk dwell upon the incomparable Truths!

Ther. I admire, I must confess, the very *Language* of the Bible. In this, methinks, I discern a Conformity, between the *Book of Nature*, and the *Book of Scripture*.

In the *Book of Nature*, the divine Teacher speaks, not barely to our Ears, but to all our Senses. And it is very remarkable, how He *varies* his Address!—Observe his grand and august Works. In these, He uses the Style of Majesty. We may call it, the true *Sublime*. It strikes with Awe, and transports the Mind.—View his ordinary Operations. Here, He descends to a plainer Dialect. This may be termed, the *familiar* Style. We comprehend it with Ease, and attend to it with Pleasure.—In the more ornamented Parts of the Creation, He clothes his Meaning with Elegance. All is rich and brilliant. We are delighted; We are charmed. And what is this, but the *florid* Style?

A Variety, somewhat similar, runs through the Scriptures.—Would You see *History*, in all her *Simplicity*, and all her *Force*; most beautifully easy, yet irresistibly striking?—See Her, or rather *feel* her Energy, touching the nicest Movements of the Soul, and triumphing over our Passions, in the inimitable Narra-

* *St. Luke*, in his evangelical History, uses this beautiful Image, *ἐκκρεμαστος*. The People hung upon the Lips of their all-wise Teacher. *Luke* xix. 48. Which implies two very strong Ideas—an *Attention*, that nothing could interrupt—and an *Eagerness*, scarce ever to be satisfied.

— *Pendetque loquentis ab Ore.*

VIRG.

tive

DIALOGUE I. 17

tive of *Joseph's* Life.—The Representation of *Esau's* bitter Distress*; the Conversation-Pieces of *Jonathan*, and his gallant Friend†; the memorable Journal of the Disciples going to *Emmaus*‡; are finished Models of the *Impassioned* and *Affecting*.—Here is nothing studied; no Flights of Fancy; no Embellishments of Oratory. Yet, how inferior is the Episode of *Nisus* and *Eurialus*, though worked up by the most masterly Hand in the World, to the undissembled artless Fervency of these scriptural Sketches ||!

Are We pleased with the Elevation and Dignity of an *Heroic Poem*; or the Tenderness and Perplexity of a *Dramatic Performance*? In the Book of *Job*, they are both united, and both unequalled.—Conformably to the exactest Rules of Art, as the Action advances, the Incidents are more alarming, and the Images more magnificent. The Language glows, and the Pathos swells. Till, at last, the DEITY Himself makes his Entrance. He speaks from the Whirlwind, and summons the Creation: summons Heaven, and all its shining Host; the Elements, and their most wonderful Productions; to vouch for the Wisdom of his pro-

* Gen. xxvii. 30, &c.

† 1 Sam. xviii, xix, xx.

‡ Luke xxiv. 13, &c.

|| Let a Person of true Taste, peruse, in a *critical* View, the two first Chapters of *St. Luke*. He will there find a Series of the most surprising Incidents, related with the greatest *Simplicity*, yet with the utmost *Majesty*.—All which, wonderfully affecting in themselves, are *heightened* and *illuminated*, by a judicious Intermixture of the sublimest Pieces of Poetry. For my own Part, I know not how to characterize them more properly, than by *Solomon's* elegant Comparison.—*They are as gold Rings set with the Beryl, or as bright Ivory overlaid with Sapphires.* Cantic. v. 14.

vidential Dispensations.—His Word strikes Terror, and flashes Conviction : decides the momentous Controversy, and closes the august Drama, with all possible Solemnity and Grandeur.

If We sometimes choose a *plaintive* Strain ; such as softens the Mind, and soothes an agreeable Melancholy : are any of the antient Tragedies superior, in the Eloquence of Mourning, to *David's* pathetic Elegy on his beloved *Jonathan**; to his most passionate and inconsoleable Moan †, over the lovely but unhap-

* 2 Sam. i. 19, &c.

† 2 Sam. xviii. 33. *The King was vehemently affected (ירג) and went up to the Chamber, and wept : and as He went, He said ; O my Son Absalom ! my Son, my Son Absalom ! Would to GOD I had died for Thee ! O Absalom, my Son, my Son !*—Such a Picture, and so much Pathos ; so artless both, and both so exquisite ; I must acknowledge, I never met with, among all the Representations of Dignity in Distress.—The King's Troops had gained a signal Victory. His Crown and his Life were rescued from the most imminent Danger. Yet all these joyful Tidings were obliterated by the overwhelming Impetuosity of his Grievs.—The News of *Absalom's* Death, struck Him like a Dagger. He starts from his Seat. He hastens into Retirement, there to pour out his Soul in copious Lamentation. But his Anguish is too impetuous, to bear a Moment's Restraint. He bursts immediately into a Flood of Tears ; and cries, as He goes ; *O Absalom, &c.*

What says *Mezentius*, when his Son is slain ? When, to sharpen his Sorrow, the pale Corpse, the miserable Spectacle, is before his Eyes, and within his Arms ? The most pathetic Word He utters, is

—Heu ! nunc misero mibi demum
Exilium infelix, nunc altè Vulnus adaectum.

How languid is *Virgil* ! How *inexpressive* the Prince of Latin Poetry ! compared with the royal Mourner in *Israel* ! Most evident, from this and many other Instances, is the Superiority of the Scriptures, in copying Nature, and painting the Passions.

DIALOGUE I. 19

py *Absalom*; or to that melodious Woe, which warbles and bleeds, in every Line of *Jeremiah's* Lamentations?

Would We be entertained with the daring Sublimity of *Homer*, or the correct Majesty of *Virgil*? With the expressive Delicacy of *Horace*, or the rapid Excursions of *Pindar*? Behold them joined, behold them excelled, in the Odes of *Moses*, and the eucharistic Hymn of *Deborah*; in the exalted Devotion of the Psalms, and the glorious Enthusiasm of the Prophets.

Asp. Only with this Difference, That the former are *tuneful Triflers* *, and amuse the Fancy with empty Fiction: the latter are Teachers sent from GOD, and make the Soul *wise unto Salvation*.—The Bible, is not only the brightest Ornament, but the most invaluable Depositum. On a right, a practical Knowledge of these *lively Oracles*, depends the present Comfort, and the endless Felicity of Mankind. Whatever, therefore, in Study or Conversation, has no Connection with their divine Contents; may be reckoned among the *Toys* of Literature, or the *Cyphers* of Discourse.

Ther. Here again the Book of Scripture, is somewhat like the Magazine of Nature. What can We desire, for our *Accommodation* and *Delight*, which this Store-House of Conveniences does not afford? What can We wish, for our *Edification* and *Improvement*, which that Fund of Knowledge does not supply? Of these We may truly affirm, each, in its respective Kind, is *profitable unto all Things*.

Are We Admirers of *Antiquity*?—Here, We are led back, beyond the universal Deluge, and far be-

* *Ludit amabiliter.*

yond the Date of any other Annals.—We are introduced among the earliest Inhabitants of the Earth. We take a View of Mankind, in their undisguised primitive Plainness, and when the Days of their Life were but little short of a thousand Years.—We are brought acquainted with the Original of Nations; with the Creation of the World; and with the Birth of Time itself.

Are We delighted with *vast* Atchievements? — Where is any Thing comparable to the Miracles in *Egypt*, and the Wonders in the Field of *Zoan*? To the Memoirs of the *Israelites*, passing through the Depths of the Sea; sojourning in the inhospitable Desarts; and conquering the Kingdoms of *Canaan*? — Where shall We meet with Instances of martial Bravery, equal to the prodigious Exploits of the *Judges*; or the adventurous Deeds of *Jesse's* valiant Son, and his matchless Band of *Worthies*? — Here, We behold the fundamental Laws of the Universe, sometimes suspended, sometimes reversed: and not only the Current of *Jordan*, but the Course of Nature controuled. In short; when We enter the Field of Scripture, We tread — on *enchanted*, shall I say? rather — on *consecrated* Ground. Where Astonishment and Awe are awakened, at every Turn. Where is all, more than all, the *Marvelous* of Romance*; connected with all the Precision and Sanctity of Truth.

If We want *Maxims* of *Wisdom*, or have a Taste for the *Laconic Style*; how copiously may our Wants be supplied, and how delicately our Taste gratified! Especially, in the Book of *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, and

— *Heroum Fabula veris*
Vincitur Historiis.

some

some of the *minor* Prophets.—Here, are the most sage Lessons of Instruction; adapted to every Circumstance of Life; formed upon the Experience of all preceding Ages; and perfected by the unerring SPIRIT of Inspiration. — These delivered, with such remarkable Conciseness; that One might venture to say, every Word is a Sentence*. At least, every Sentence may be called an *Apothegm*; sparkling with Brightness of Thought, or weighty with Solidity of Sense. The whole, like a Profusion of Pearls—*each* containing, in a very small Compass, a Value almost immense—all heaped up (as an ingenious Critic speaks) with a confused Magnificence, above all Order.

If We look for the *Strength* of Reasoning, and the *Warmth* of Exhortation: the *insinuating Arts* of genteel Address, or the *manly Boldness* of impartial Reproof: all the Thunder of the Orator, without any of his Ostentation; all the Politeness of the Courtier, without any of his Flattery:—let Us have Recourse to the Acts of the Apostles, and to the Epistles of St. Paul†. These are a *Specimen*, or rather these are the *Standard*, of them all.

I do not wonder, therefore, that a Taste so refined, and a Judgment so correct as *Milton's*, should discern higher

* What *Cicero* said of *Thucydides*, is more eminently true, concerning our royal Moralist, and his rich Collection of Ethics; concerning our evangelical Historians, and their copious Variety of Facts. *Eum adeo esse Rebus plenum refertumque, ut prope Verborum Numerum Numero Rerum æquet.*

† Another very remarkable Instance of Propriety in St. Paul's Writings, is, That though *diffuse* in the *doctrinal*, they are *concise* in the *preceptive* Parts. On the former, it

22 DIALOGUE I.

higher Attractives in the Volume of Inspiration, than in the most celebrated Authors of Greece and Rome,

————— Yet not the more

Cease I to wander, where the Muses haunt
Clear Spring, or shady Grove, or sunny Hill,
Smit with the Love of sacred Song: but CHIEF
Thee Sion, and the flowery Banks beneath,
That wash thy hallowed Feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit *.

Asp. Another Recommendation of the Scriptures, is, That they afford the most awful and most amiable Manifestations of the GODHEAD. His Glory shines, and his Goodness smiles, in those divine Pages, with unparalleled Lustre.—Here, We have a satisfactory Explanation of *our own State*. The Origin of Evil

was absolutely necessary to enlarge. On the latter, it is always judicious to be short. The celebrated Rule of *Horace*,

Quicquid præcipies, esto brevis,

Was never more exactly observed, nor more finely exemplified, than by our Apostolic Author. See that noble String of Precepts, *1 Thess. v. 16, 17, &c.* — See another choice Collection of the same Kind, *Rom. xii. 9, 10, &c.* In which the *Energy* of the Diction is no less admirable, than the *Conciseness* of the Sentence. ΑΠΟΣΥΓΓΡΗΤΗΣ; — ΚΟΛΛΩΜΕΝΟΝ — ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΟΥΣ — ΣΙΟΝΤΕΣ — ΠΡΟΣΗΛΕΙΣΤΕΣ — ΔΙΩΚΟΝΤΕΣ — are some of the most vigorous Words that Language can furnish; and form the most animated Meaning, that Imagination can conceive.

* That is, “ He still was pleased to study the Beauties of the antient Poets; but his highest Delight was in the Songs of Sion, in the holy Scriptures, and in these He meditated Day and Night.”

See Dr. Newton's Edit.

is traced; the Cause of all our Misery discovered; and the Remedy, the infallible Remedy, both clearly shewn, and freely offered.—The Merits of the bleeding JESUS, lay a firm Foundation for all our Hopes: while Gratitude for his dying Love, suggests the most winning Incitement to every Duty.—Morality, *Theron*, your (and let me add, *my*) admired Morality, is delineated in all its Branches. Is placed upon its proper Basis, and raised to its highest Elevation.—The SPIRIT of GOD is promised, to enlighten the Darkness of our Understandings, and strengthen the Imbecillity of our Wills. What an ample—Can you indulge me, on this favourite Topic?

Ther. It is, I assure You, equally pleasing to myself. Your Enlargements, therefore, need no Apology.

Asp. What ample Provision is made, by these blessed Books, for all our spiritual Wants! And, in this Respect, how indisputable is their Superiority to all other Compositions!

Is any One convinced of *Guilt*, as provoking Heaven, and ruining the Soul?—Let Him ask *Reason*, to point out a Means of Reconciliation, and a Refuge of Safety. Reason hesitates, as She replies; “The Deity *may*, perhaps, accept our Supplications, and “grant Forgiveness.”—But the Scriptures leave Us not to the *sad Uncertainty* of Conjecture. They speak the Language of clear Assurance. GOD *has* set forth a Propitiation*: He *does* forgive our Iniquities†: He *will* remember our Sins no more‡.

Are We *assaulted* by Temptation, or *averse* to Duty?—*Philosophy* may attempt to parry the Thrust, or to stir up the reluctant Mind; by disclosing the *De-*

* Rom. iii. 25. † Psal. ciii. 3. ‡ Heb. viii. 12.

fermity of Vice, and urging the *Fitness* of Things. Feeble Expedients! Just as well calculated, to accomplish the Ends proposed; as the flimsy Fortification of a Cobweb, to defend Us from the Ball of a Cannon; or, as the gentle Vibrations of a Lady's Fan, to make a Wind-bound Navy sail.—The Bible recommends no such incompetent Succours. *My Grace*, says its almighty Author, *is sufficient for Thee**. —*Sin shall not have Dominion over You*†.—The great JEHOVAH, in whom is everlasting Strength, *He worketh in Us both to will, and to do, of his good Pleasure*‡.

Should We be visited with *Sickness*, or overtaken by any *Calamity*, the Consolation which *Plato* offers, is; That such Dispensations co-incide with the universal Plan of divine Government. *Virgil* will tell Us, for our Relief; That afflictive Visitations are, more or less, the unavoidable Lot of all Men. Another *Moralist* whispers in the dejected Sufferer's Ear, "Impatience adds to the Load: whereas, a calm Submission renders it more supportable."—Does the Word of Revelation dispense such *spiritless* and *fugitive* Cordials? No: Those sacred Pages inform Us, That Tribulations are fatherly Chastisements; Tokens of our Maker's Love, and Fruits of his Care. That they are intended to work *in Us*, the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness; and to work *out for Us*, an eternal Weight of Glory||.

Should

* 2 Cor. xii. 9. † Rom. vi. 15. ‡ Phil. ii. 13.

|| 2 Cor. iv. 17. What are all the *consolatory* Expedients, prescribed in all the Volumes of Heathen Morality, compared with this *one* Recipe of Revelation? They are, in Point of cheering Efficacy, somewhat like the *Froth* on the Conflux of a thousand rapid Streams, compared

Should We, under the Summons of *Death*, have Recourse to the most celebrated *Comforters* in the Heathen World; they would increase our Apprehensions, rather than mitigate our Dread. Death is represented, by the great Master of their Schools; as “The most formidable of all Evils.” They were not able *positively* to determine, Whether the Soul survived; and never so much as *dreamt* of the Resurrection of the Body.—Whereas, the Book of GOD strips the Monster of his Horrors, or turns Him into a Messenger of Peace: gives Him an Angel’s Face, and a Deliverer’s Hand. Ascertaining to the *Souls* of the Righteous, an immediate *Translation* into the Regions of Bliss; and ensuring to their *Bodies*, a most advantageous *Revival*, at the Restoration of all Things.

Inestimable Book! It heals the Maladies of Life, and subdues the Fear of Death. It strikes a light-some Vista, through the Gloom of the Grave; and opens a charming, a glorious Prospect of Immortality in the Heavens.

These, with many other Excellencies peculiar to the Scriptures, One would imagine more than sufficient, to engage *every sensible* Heart in their Favour; and introduce them, with the *highest Esteem*, into every improved

pared with a single Draught of *Homer’s Nephthé*. Which, He tells Us, was

*Temper’d with Drugs of sov’reign Use, it assuage
The boiling Bosom of tumultuous Rage;
To clear the cloudy Front of wrinkled Care,
And dry the tearful Sluices of Despair.
Charm’d with that virtuous Draught, th’ exalted Mind
All Sense of Woe delivers to the Wind.*

Odyss. IV.

improved Conversation.—They had such an Effect upon the *finest* Genius, and *most accomplished* * Person; that former or latter Ages can boast. Infomuch, that He made, while living, this public Declaration; and left it, when He died, upon everlasting Record—*Thy Words are sweeter to my Mouth, than Honey* †.—*Thy Law is my Meditation all the Day* ‡.—*I will speak of thy Testimonies, even before Kings* §.—If David tasted so much Sweetness in a *small*, and that the *least* valuable, Part of the divine Word; how much richer is the Feast to Us! Since the Gospel is added to the

* If we consider *David*, in the great Variety of his fine Qualifications—The Ornaments of his Person, and the far more illustrious Endowments of his Mind—The surprising Revolutions in his Fortune; sometimes, reduced to the lowest Ebb of Adversity; sometimes, riding upon the highest Tide of Prosperity—His singular Dexterity, in extricating Himself from Difficulties; and peculiar Felicity, in accommodating Himself to all Circumstances—The Prizes He won, as a youthful Champion; and the Victories He gained, as an experienced General—His masterly Hand upon the Harp, and his inimitable Talent for Poetry—The admirable Regulations of his royal Government, and the incomparable Usefulness of his public Writings—The Depth of his Repentance, and the Height of his Devotion—The Vigour of his Faith in the divine Promises, and the Ardour of his Love to the divine Majesty—If We consider these, with several other Marks of Honour and Grace, which ennoble the History of his Life; We shall see such an *Assemblage* of shining Qualities, as perhaps were never united in any *other* merely human Character.

This Observation was expunged. But, upon maturer Thoughts, it is offered to the Public. In order to convince a *polite* Reader, That the Love of the Scriptures, and the Exercise of Devotion, are by no Means the low Peculiarities of a *vulgar* Mind.

† Psal. cxix. 103. ‡ *ibid.* cxix. 97. § *ibid.* cxix. 46.

Law,

Law, and the Canon of Scripture completed! Since (to borrow the Words of a Prophet) the LORD GOD *has sealed up the Sum*; has put the last Hand to his Work; and rendered it *full of Wisdom, and perfect in Beauty**,

Ther. Another very distinguishing Peculiarity of the sacred Writings, just occurs to my Mind—The Method, of communicating Advice, or administering Reproof, by *Parables*. A Method, which levels itself to the *lowest* Apprehension, without giving Offence to the *most supercilious* Temper. Yet, is as much superior, to plain unornamented Precept; as the enlivened Scenes of a well-wrought Tragedy, are more impressive and affecting, than a simple Narration of the Plot.

Our LORD was asked, by a Student of the *Jewish* Law, *Who is my Neighbour?* Which implied another Question, *How is he to be loved?*—The Inquirer was *conceited* of Himself; yet, *ignorant* of the Truth, and *deficient* in his Duty. Had the wise Instructor of Mankind abruptly declared, *You neither know the former, nor fulfil the latter*. Probably, the Querist would have reddened with Indignation, and departed in a Rage.—Therefore, to teach, and not disgust; to *convince* the Man of his Error, and not *exasperate* his Mind; the blessed JESUS frames a Reply, as amiable in the Manner, as it was pertinent to the Purpose.

A certain Person, going down from *Jerusalem* to *Jericho*, fell among Thieves †. Not content to rob Him of his Treasure, they strip him of his Gar-

* Ezek. xxviii. 12.

† Luke x. 30.

ments; wound Him with great Barbarity; and leave Him half dead.—Soon after this calamitous Accident, a Traveler happens to come along that very Road. And, what renders Him more likely to administer Relief, He is one of the *sacred Order*. One, who taught others the lovely Lessons of Humanity and Charity; and was, therefore, under the strongest Obligations, to exemplify them in his own Practice. He just glances an Eye upon the deplorable Object: sees Him stretched on the cold Ground, and weltering in his Blood. But, takes no farther Notice. Nay, to avoid the Trouble of an Inquiry, passes by on the other Side.—Scarce was He departed, when a *Levite* approaches. This Man *comes nearer, and looks on* the miserable Spectacle. Takes a leisurely and attentive Survey * of the Case. And, though every Gash in the bleeding Flesh, cried and pleaded for Compassion; this Minister of the Sanctuary, neither speaks a Word to comfort, nor moves a Hand to help.—Last comes a *Samaritan* †; one of the abhorred

* This seems to be the Import of *admirari*. Luke x. 32. This *diversifies* the Idea, and *heightens* the Description of *Jewish* Inhumanity.

† If this was a Parable, We cannot but admire the Accuracy of our LORD, both in *laying* the Scene, and *selecting* the Circumstances.—It is the Maxim of a great Critic,

Ficta Voluptatis Causa sint proxima veris.

And how very apparent is the Air of *Probability*, in this sacred Apologue!—The Way from *Jerusalem* to *Jericho*, lying through a Desert, was much infested by Thieves, and too commodious for their Purposes of Violence.—What could be more likely to happen, than the Passage of a *Priest* and *Levite* along that Road? Since *Jericho* was a City, appropriated to the *Levitical* Order; and

horred Nation; whom the *Jew* hated with the most implacable Malignity. Though the *Levite* had neglected an expiring Brother: though the Priest had with-held his Pity, from one of the LORD's peculiar People: the very Moment this *Samaritan* sees the unhappy Sufferer, He melts into Commiseration. He forgets the *imbittered Foe*, and considers only the *distressed Fellow-creature*. He springs from his Horse,

contained no less than twelve thousand Attendants, on the Service of the Temple.

How judiciously is the *principal Figure* circumstanced!—Had the *Calamity* befallen a *Samaritan*, it would have made but *feeble Impressions* of Pity; and those, perhaps, immediately effaced by *stronger Emotions* of Hate. But, when it was a *Jew*, that lay bleeding to Death; the Representation was sure to *interest* the Hearer in the Distress, and awaken a tender Concern.—Had the *Relief* been administered by a *Jew*, the Benevolence would have shone, but in a much *fainter Light*. Whereas, when it came from the Hands of a *Samaritan*, whom all the *Jews* had agreed to abjure, to execrate, and rank with the very Fiends of Hell, how bright—how charmingly and irresistibly bright—was the Lustre of *such Charity*!

Let the Reader consider the Temper, expressed in that *rancorous Reflection*; *Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a Devil*, John viii. 48.—Let Him compare that inveterate Malevolence, with the *benign and compassionate Spirit* of our amiable Traveler.—Then, let Him say; Whether he ever beheld a finer or a bolder Contrast? Whether, upon the Whole, He ever saw the *Ordonnance* of descriptive Painting, more *justly designed*, or more *happily executed*?

I would beg Leave to observe farther, That the *virulent Animosity* of the *Jew* discovers itself, even in the Lawyer's Reply; *He that showed Mercy on Him*. He will not so much as *name* the *Samaritan*. Especially in a Case, where He could not be named without an honourable Distinction.—So strongly marked, and so exactly preserved, are the *features*, the *Manners* or distinguishing Qualities of each Person, in the sacred Narrations.

and

and resolves to intermit his Journey. The Oil and Wine, intended for his own Refreshment, He freely converts into healing Unguents. He binds up the Wounds; sets the disabled Stranger, upon his own Beast; and, with all the *Affiduity* of a *Servant*, with all the *Tenderness* of a *Brother*, conducts Him to an Inn. There, He deposits Money, for his present Use: charges the Host to omit nothing, that might conduce to the Comfort of his Guest: and promises, to defray the whole Expence of his Lodging, his Maintenance, and his Cure.

What a lively Picture this, of the most *disinterested* and *active* Benevolence! A Benevolence, which excludes no Persons, not even Strangers or Enemies, from its tender Regards. Which disdains no Condescension, grudges no Cost, in its Labours of Love.—Could any Method of Conviction have been *more forcible*, and at the same Time *more pleasing*, than the Interrogatory, proposed by our LORD, and deduced from the Story? *Which now of these Three, thinkest Thou, was Neighbour unto Him, that fell among the Thieves?*—Or, can there be an Advice, more *suitable* to the Occasion; more *important* in its Nature; or expressed with a more *sententious* Energy; than *Go Thou, and do likewise?*—In this Case, the Learner instructs, the Delinquent condemns, Himself. *Bigotry* hears away its Prejudice; and *Pride* (when the Moral so sweetly, so imperceptibly insinuates) even *Pride* itself lends a willing Ear to Admonition.

Asp. It has been very justly remarked, That this *Eloquence of Similitudes*, is equally affecting to the Wise,

Wife, and intelligible to the Ignorant.—It *shows* *, rather than *relates*, the Point to be illustrated.—It has been admired, by the best Judges, in all Ages. But, never was carried to its *highest Perfection*, till our LORD spoke the Parable of the *Prodigal* †.—Which has a *Beauty*, that no Paraphrase can heighten: a *Perspicuity*, that renders all Interpretation needless: and a *Force*, which every Reader, not totally insensible, must feel.

Ther. The Condescension and Goodness of GOD are, every where, conspicuous.—In the Productions of Nature, He conveys to Us the most *valuable* Fruits, by the Intervention of the *loveliest* Blossoms. Though the Present is, in itself, extremely acceptable; He has given it an *additional Endearment*, by the Beauties which array it, or the Perfumes which surround it.—In the Pages of Revelation likewise, He has communicated to Us the most *glorious Truths*, adorned with all the *Graces of Composition*. Such as may polish the Man of Genius, and improve the Man of Worth. Such as highly delight our Imagination, even while they cultivate and refine our Morals.—So that they really are, as one of their divine Authors very elegantly speaks; *Like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver* ‡.

Assp.

* *Discentem*, says Seneca upon the Subject, & *audientem in rem presentem adducunt*. Epist. lix.

† Luke xv. 11.

‡ *Prov.* xxv. 11.—*Therén* follows the received Translation. I should prefer the Exposition of *Glassius*; who supposes כסף to signify, *Retiacula argentea*, in quibus Oculi sunt minutissimi, penetrabiles tamen Visu. According to this Interpretation, the Passage will present Us with
Apples

Asp. Who then would not gladly receive that gracious Exhortation; *Let the Word of CHRIST dwell in You richly**? Who would not willingly obey that benign Command; *Thou shalt talk of it, when Thou sittest in thine House, and when Thou walkest by the Way; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up*†.

When I consider the *Language* of the Scriptures, and sometimes experience their Energy on my Soul; I am inclined to say—"Other Writings, though polished with the nicest Touches of Art, only tinkle on the Ear, or affect Us like the Shepherd's Reed. But these, even amidst all their noble Negligence, strike—alarm—transport Us—somewhat like the Voice of Thunder, or the Arch-Angel's Trumpet."

When I consider the *Contents* of the Scriptures; and believe myself interested, in the Promises they make, and the Privileges they confer; I am induced to cry out—"What are all the other Books in the World, compared with these invaluable Volumes? No more than an *entertaining Novel*, or a few *prudential Rules* for domestic Oeconomy, compared with

Apples of Gold in Net-work, or Lattice-work, of Silver. Where the exquisitely fine Fruit, receives a new Charm, by shewing itself through the elegant Apertures of the Salver.

* Coloss. iii. 16. *The Word of CHRIST*; so the Apostle calls the whole inspired Writings, and thereby asserts the *Divinity* of his Master—*Dwell*; not make a short Stay or an occasional Visit, but take up a fixed and stated Residence.—*Richly*; in the largest Measure, and with the greatest Efficacy; so as to fill the Memory, sway the Will, and actuate all the Affections.

† Deut. vi. 7.

DIALOGUE I. 33

“ a Parent's Will; a royal Charter; or an imperial Grant of Titles and Manors.”

All these Circumstances remind me of an *Encomium*, most deservedly given to the BIBLE. Which, though quite *artless*, is, I think, abundantly more expressive, than the most laboured Efforts of Rhetoric.

—It came from the Lips of a Martyr. Who, being condemned to die, for his inviolable Adherence to the pure Doctrines of Scripture; when he arrived at the Stake, and had composed Himself for Execution, took his final Leave in these affecting Words: “ Farewel Sun and Moon! Farewel all the Beauties of Creation, and Comforts of Life! Farewel my honoured Friends! Farewel my beloved Relations! “ And farewel thou *precious, precious Book of GOD!*”

Aspasio had scarce uttered the last Sentence, when a Servant came to let them know; “ Supper was upon the Table.”—Very opportunely, said *Theron*, has our Repast waited, till our Conference is ended. We have shewed, what a large Field of delightful Speculation, the Scriptures open; and what ample Materials for the most refined Discourse*, they afford. As nothing can be more ungraceful, than to *neglect* in

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D

our

* Should the serious Reader want any *farther* Persuatives, to this most beneficial Practice; He may see—How particularly our divine Master *observes* the Strain of our Conversation; *Luke xxiv. 17.*—How strictly He has commanded such social Communications, as may tend to the *Use of Edifying*, *Eph. iv. 29.*—And what an Influence, our Performance or Neglect of this Command, will have in *turning the Scale*, at the Day of everlasting Judgment, *Matt. xii. 36, 37.*

34 DIALOGUE I.

our own Conduct, what We *recommend* to the Practice of *Others*; let Us, this very Night, begin to enoble our Interviews with these improving Subjects. Let Us endeavour to make religious Conversation, which is in all Respects *desirable*, in some Degree *fashionable*.



DIA-



DIALOGUE II.

THE next Morning, when Breakfast was over, *Theron* and *Aspasio* took a Walk into the Garden—Their Spirits cheared, and their Imaginations lively —Gratitude glowing in their Hearts, and the whole Creation smiling around them.

The Spot adjoining to the House, was appropriated to the Cultivation of *Flowers*.—In a Variety of handsome Compartments, were assembled the choicest Beauties of blooming Nature. Here, the *Hyacinth* hung her filken Bells, or the *Lilies* reared their silver Pyramids. There, stood the neat *Narcissus*, loosely * attired in a Mantle of snowy Lustre; or the splendid *Ranunculus* wore a full-trimmed Suit of radiant Scarlet. *Pinks* were rising to enamel the Borders; *Roses* were opening to dress the Walls; surrounded, on all Sides, with a Profusion of beauteous Forms, either latent in the Stalk, or bursting the Buds, or blown into full Expansion.

D 2

This

* ——— *Hiantem Flore decoro*
Narcissum.

This was bounded by a slight Partition; a Sort of verdant Parapet. Through which they descend by an easy Flight of Steps; and are presented with the elegant Simplicity of the *Kitchen-Garden*.—In one Place, You might see the *Marigold* flowering, or the *Beans* in Blossom. In another, the *Endive* curled her Leaves, and the Lettuce thickened her Tufts: *Collyflowers* sheltered their fair Complexion, under a green Umbrella; while the *Burrage* disshevelled * her Locks, and braided them with blooming Jewels, of a finer Azure than the finest Sapphires.—On the sunny Slopes, the *Cucumber* and *Melon* lay basking in the collected Beams. On the raised Beds, the *Artichoke* seemed to be erecting a Standard, while the *Asparagus* shot † into Ranks of Spears. The level Ground produced all Manner of cooling Sallets and nourishing Esculents. Nothing was wanting to furnish out the wholesome Luxury of an *Antediluvian* Banquet.

Soon, a high Wall intervenes. Through which a Wicket opens, and transmits them into the regular and equi-distant Rows of an *Orchard*.—This Plantation is so nicely adjusted, that it looks like an Arrangement of rural Piazzas, or a Collection of diversified Vistas. The Eye is, every where, entertained with the exactest Uniformity; and darts, with unobstructed Ease, from one End of the branching Files to

* Referring to the loose irregular Manner of its Foliation.

† Alluding, not only to the Shape, but also to the Growth of this Plant; which is so unusually quick, that it may almost be said to start, rather than to rise out of the Earth.

DIALOGUE II. 37

to the Other.—On all the Boughs, lay a lovely Evolution of *Blossoms*; arrayed in milky White, or tinged with the softest Red. Crouding into one general Cluster, without relinquishing any vacant Space for Leaves, they formed the fairest, the gayest, the grandest Alcove, that Fancy itself can imagine.—It is really like the *Court* of the *Graces*. None can approach it, without finding his Ideas brightened, and feeling his Temper exhilarated.

Contiguous to this correct Disposition of Things, Nature had thrown a *Wilderness*; hoary, grotesque, and magnificently confused. It stretched itself, with a large circular Sweep, to the North; and secured both the Olitory and the Orchard from incommoding Winds.—Copses of Hazel, and flowering Shrubs, filled the lower Spaces. While Poplars quivered aloft in Air, and Pines pierced the Clouds with their leafy Spires. Here, grew Clumps of Fir, clad in everlasting Green: there, stood Groves of Oak, that had weathered, for Ages, the wintry Storm.—Amidst this woody Theatre, ran a *winding Walk*; lined with Elms of insuperable Height: whose Branches, uniting at the Top, reared a stately Arch, and projected a solemn Shade. It was impossible to enter this lofty Labyrinth, without being struck with a *pleasing Dread*. As they proceed, every Inflection discloses a deeper Gloom, and awakens a more pensive Attention.

Having strolled in this darksome Avenue, without a Speck of Sunshine, without a Glimpse of the Heavens; on a sudden, they step into open Day—Surprising! cries *Aspasio*. What a Change is this!

38 DIALOGUE II.

What *delightful Enchantment* is Here !—One Instant, whelmed in *Trophonius's Cave* * ; where Horror frowns, and Darkness lours. Transported, the next, into the romantic Scenes of *Arcadia* ; where all is lightfome, and all is gay.—Quick as Thought †, the Arches of Heaven expand their Azure. Turrets and Spires shoot into the Skies. Towns, with their spacious Edifices, spread themselves to the admiring View.—Those Lawns, green with freshest Herbage ; those Fields, rich with undulating Corn ; where were they all, a Moment ago ?—It brings to my Mind that remarkable Situation of the *Jewish Law-giver* ; when, elevated on the Summit of *Pisgah*, He surveyed the goodly Land of Promise — surveyed the Rivers, the Floods, the Brooks of Honey and Butter—surveyed the Mountains dropping with Wine, and the Hills flowing

* The Reader may find a *curious* Account of this Cave, together with a very *humorous*, and (which should always accompany Humour, or else it will be like a Sting without the Honey,) an *improving* Description of its Effects. *Spect.* Vol. VIII. N^o 598, 599.

† Such a sudden Alteration of the Prospect, is beautifully described by *Milton* ;

As when a Scout,
Through dark and desert Ways, with Peril gone
All Night, at last by Break of chearful Dawn
Obtains the Brow of some high-climbing Hill,
Which to his Eye discovers unaware
The goodly Prospect of some foreign Land,
First seen ; or some renown'd Metropolis,
With glistering Spires and Pinacles adorn'd,
Which now the rising Sun gilds with his Beams.

Book III.

ing with Milk *—Surveyed all with those Eyes, which, for forty tedious Years, had been confined to dry Sands, ragged Rocks, and the irksome Wastes of a desolate howling Wilderness.

Here they seated themselves, on the first *mossy* † *Hillock*, which offered its Couch. The rising Sun had visited the Spot, to dry up the Dews, and exhale the Damps, that might endanger Health; to open the Violets, and expand the Primroses, that decked the Green. The whole Shade of the Wood was collected *behind* them; and a beautiful, extensive, diversified *Landschape* spread itself *before* them.

Theron, according to his usual Custom, made many improving Remarks on the Prospect, and its Furniture. He traced the Footsteps of an *all-comprehending* Contrivance, and pointed out the Strokes of *inimitable* Skill. He observed the *grand Exertions* of Power, and the *rich Exuberance* of Goodness, most signally, most charmingly conspicuous through the Whole.—Upon one Circumstance He enlarged, with a particular Satisfaction.

D 4

Ther.

* This is the Language of the Book of *Job*, and the Prophecy of *Joel*. A Language, like the Scene it describes, not beautiful only, but beautiful and rich even to *Luxuriancy*.—One would almost suspect, the *Lyric* Poet had read these Passages, and attempted an Imitation of their Delicacies:

Vinique Fontem, Lactis & uberes

Cantare Rivos, atque truncis

Lapsa cavis iterare Mella.

Lib. II. Od. 19.

† *Horace* would have called it, *Cespes fortuitus*.

Ther. See! *Aspasio*; how all is calculated, to administer the highest *Delight* to Mankind.—Those Trees and Hedges, which skirt the Extremities of the Landscape; stealing away from their real Bulk, and lessening by gentle Diminutions; appear like elegant *Pictures* in *Miniature*. Those, which occupy the nearer Situations, are a Set of noble *Images*; swelling upon the Eye, in full *Proportion*, and in a Variety of graceful Attitudes. Both of them *ornamenting* the several Apartments of our common Abode, with a Mixture of Delicacy and Grandeur.

The *Blossoms*, that array the Branches; the *Flowers*, that embroider the Mead; address and entertain our Eyes with every Charm of Beauty*. Whereas, to other Creatures, they are destitute of all those Attractives;

* Therefore, when the Prophet describes the Christian Church, adorned with all the *Beauties of Holiness*, He borrows his Imagery from these amiable Objects. *Israel shall bud and blossom*, *Isai.* xxvii. 6.—Nay, the very Wilderness, even the Gentile Nations, being converted unto CHRIST, shall blossom as a Rose, *Isai.* xxxv. 1.—I will be as the Dew unto Israel; He shall blossom as the Lily, and cast forth his Roots as Lebanon, *Hos.* xiv. 6. What an elegant Picture! And what a comfortable Promise! Here is the Queen of Flowers, and the Prince of Trees. Nothing fairer than the full-blown Lily: nothing firmer than the deep-rooted Cedars. Yet these are a Representation (and but a faint Representation) of the Comeliness, which the all-gracious REDEEMER puts upon his People; and of the Stability, which they derive from his inviolable Faithfulness.

N. B. The fourteenth of *Hosea*, is one of those Chapters, which, for their peculiar Importance and Excellency, deserve not only to have a Turn in our Reading, but a Place in our Memory.

DIALOGUE II. 41

tives ; which result from a Combination of the loveliest Colours, and most alluring Forms. — Yonder *Streams*; that glide, with smooth Serenity, along the Vallies ; glittering to the distant View, like Sheets of polished Crystal ; or soothing the attentive Ear, with the Softness of aquatic Murmurs ; are no less *exhilarating* to the Fancy, than to the Soul, through which they pass. — The huge enormous *Mountain* ; the steep and dizzy *Precipice* ; the pendent Horrors of the craggy *Promontory* : wild and tremendous as they are, furnish out an agreeable Entertainment to the human Mind ; and *please*, even while they *terrify*. Whereas, the Beasts take no other Notice of those majestic Deformities, than only to avoid the Dangers, they threaten.

Ass. How wonderfully do such Considerations *exalt* our Idea of the CREATOR's Goodness ; his very *distinguishing* Goodness to Mankind ! And should they not proportionably *endear* that eternal Benefactor to our Affections ? — His ever-bountiful Hand has scattered Blessings, and with profuse Liberality, among all the Ranks of animated Existence. But to *Us* He exercises a Beneficence of a very superior Kind. *We* are treated as his peculiar Favourites. *We* are admitted to Scenes of Delight, which None but Ourselves are capable of relishing.

Ther. Another Remark, though very obvious, is equally important. The Destination of all these external Things, is no less *advantageous*, than their Formation is *beautiful*. — The Bloom, which engages the Eye with its delicate Hues, is cherishing the *Embryo Fruit* ; and forming, within its silken Folds, the Rudiments of a *future Dessert*. — Those Streams,
which

which shine from afar, like fluid Silver, are much more valuable in their Productions, and beneficial in their Services, than they are amiable in their Appearance. They distribute, as they roll along their winding Banks, *Cleanliness* to our Houses, and *Fruitfulness* to our Lands. They nourish, and at their own Expence, a never failing Supply of the *finest Fish*. They visit our Cities, and attend our Wharfs, as so many *public Vehicles*, ready to set out at all Hours.

Those Sheep, which give their Udders to be drained by the busy frisking Lambs, are fattening their Flesh for *our Support*; and while they fill their own Fleeces, are providing for *our comfortable Clothing*. —Yonder Kine, some of which are browsing upon the tender Herb; others, satiated with Pasturage, ruminate under the shady Covert; though conscious of no such Design, are concocting for our Use, one of the *softest, purest, healthiest* Liquors in the World. —The Bees, that fly humming about our Seat, and pursue their Work on the fragrant Blossoms, are collecting Balm and Sweetness, to compose the richest of Syrups. Which, though the Produce of *their Toil*, is intended for *our Good*.

Nature, and her whole Family, are our *obsequious* Servants, our *ever-active* Labourers. They bring the Fruits of their united Industry, and pour them into our Lap, or deposite them in our Store-Rooms.

Ass. Who can ever sufficiently admire this immense Benignity?—The SUPREME Disposer of Events, has commanded Delight and Profit to walk Hand in Hand, through his ample Creation: making all Things so *perfectly pleasing*, as if Beauty was their only

only End; yet all Things so *eminently serviceable* *, as if Usefulness had been their sole Design.—And, as a most winning Invitation to our Gratitude, He has rendered Man the Center, in which all the *Emanations* of his Beneficence, diffused through this Terrestrial System, finally *terminate*.

But, my dear *Theron*, is not this apparent, in a much more wonderful Manner, throughout the whole Oeconomy of *Redemption*?—It were a small Thing for this inferior Class of *unintelligent* Creatures, to be continually employing themselves for our Benefit. Even the *Son of the most High GOD*, through all his incarnate State, acted the very same Part.—He took Flesh, and bore the Infirmities of human Nature, not for Himself, but *for Us Men, and our Salvation*. He suffered Want, and endured Misery in all its Forms; that *We* might possess the Fulness of Joy, and abound in Pleasures for evermore.—When He poured out his Soul in Agonies, under the Curse of an *avenging* Law; what other End had He in View, but to make *Us* Partakers of eternal Blessedness? When He fulfilled, perfectly fulfilled the whole *commanding* Law; was it not on purpose, that his Merits might be imputed to *Us*? That *We*, by *his* Obedience, might be made righteous? Yes;

————— *For Us He liv'd,*
Toi'd for our Ease, and for our Safety bled.

Nothing in the whole Course————

Ther.

* *Omnes Mundi Partes ita constitutæ sunt, ut neque ad Usus meliores esse poterint, neque ad Speciem pulchriores.*

Ther. Pardon me for interrupting You, *Aspasio*. I have no Objection to the general Drift of your Discourse. But that particular Notion of *imputed Righteousness*, has always appeared to me in a very ridiculous Light. And I must say, that such a *Puritanical Nostrum* makes a very unbecoming Figure, amongst your other manly and correct Sentiments of Religion.

Asp. You know, *Theron*, I have long ago disavowed that *ignoble* Prejudice, which rejects Doctrines, or despises Persons, because they happen to be branded with contemptible Names. 'Tis true, the Writers styled *Puritans*, are remarkable for their Attachment to this *Peculiarity* of the Gospel. It runs through all their Theological Works; and very eminently distinguishes them, from the Generality of our modern Treatises.—But, must it *therefore* be wrong, because maintained by that particular Set of People? Or, are they the *only* Advocates for this important Truth?

Ther. Aye: it is as I suspected. I have lately conjectured, from several Hints in my *Aspasio's* Discourse, that He has been warping to the low ungentleman-like Peculiarities of those whimsical Fanatics.

Asp. I cannot conceive, why You should call them *whimsical*.—To settle Faith on its *proper Basis*, the meritorious Righteousness of the REDEEMER; and to deduce Obedience from its *true Origin*, the Love of GOD shed abroad in the Heart—To *search* the Conscience, and *convince* the Judgment—To *awaken* the lethargic, and *comfort* the afflicted Soul—And all from a thorough Knowledge, joined to a masterly Application, of the divine Word—These, sure, are
not

not *whimsical* Talents, but *real* Excellencies. Yet these, if We may credit History, entered into the Preaching; these, if We will examine impartially, are to be found in the Writings of the Puritans.— And a *Pearl*, you will please to remember, is a *Pearl* still, though it should hang in the *Ethiopian's* Ear.

Ther. *Ethiopian* indeed! You have truly characterized, that *demure* and *gloomy* Generation. I hope, You don't intend to introduce their Solemnity and Reserve, into your easy and engaging Conversation. Though, for aught I can judge, this would be no more ungraceful, than to patch such *antiquated* Notions on your own *refined* Scheme of Christianity.

Asp. My dear Friend, You are too ludicrous; and I begin to catch the Infection. We had better return to our first Topic. Let us contemplate the Wonders of Creation; and as We *admire* the Works, learn to *adore* the Maker.

Ther. None of your Evasions, good *Aspasio*. You must not think to put me off at this Rate. I have wanted an Opportunity, to rally you upon this Head; and to argue or laugh You, out of these *religious* Oddities.

Asp. If You will not agree to Terms of Peace; I hope, you will allow some Cessation of Arms. At least, till I can muster my Forces, and prepare for the Vindication of my Principles.

Ther. No: upon the Spot, and out of Hand, You are required to answer for yourself, and these same queer Opinions.—I shall serve You, as the *Roman* Consul served the *procrastinating* Monarch. When He demurred about his Reply to the Demands of the Senate, and said, *He would consider of the Matter*: the resolute Ambassador drew a Circle round Him with his

his Cane, and insisted upon a positive Answer; before He stepped over those Limits.

Asp. This, however, You will give me Leave to observe, That the Affair is of a *very serious* Nature. Upon Condition, that you will dismiss your Flourishes of Wit, and Strokes of Satyr; I will acquaint You with the Reasons, which have made me a thorough Convert to this Doctrine.—Once, I held it in the utmost Contempt; and pitied the Simplicity of (as I then styled them) its *deluded* Admirers. But, I am now become *such* a Fool, that I may be *truly* wise, and *substantially* happy. I have seen my *ruined* State; and I bless GOD for this sovereign *Restorative*. It is the Source of my strongest Consolations, and the very Foundation of my eternal Hopes.

Ther. Excuse me, *Aspasio*; if the Vivacity of my Temper, and the seemingly uncouth Tenet, kindled me into a more humorous Gaiety, than became the Occasion. You speak of the Point, with so much Seriousness, and in such weighty Terms, as check my Levity, and command my Respect. Be pleased to execute, what You have promised; and the most *engaged* Attention of my Mind, shall atone for the *petulant* Sallies of my Tongue.

Asp. To conceive a Dislike of any Doctrine, only because Persons of a particular Denomination, have been very officious to promote its Reception; this is hardly consistent with an *impartial* Inquiry after Truth.

Ther. I grant it, *Aspasio*. And I should be ashamed of my Opposition, if it was founded on so slight a
Bottom.

Bottom. But, abstracted from all *Party-Considerations*, I can see nothing in this supposed Article of our Faith, that may recommend it to the unprejudiced Inquirer.—What can be more *awkward* than the Term, or more *irrational* than the Sentiment?

Asp. The Word *imputed*, when used in this Connection, may possibly convey a disagreeable Sound to the Ears of some People. Because, they look upon it, as the peculiar Phraseology of a few *superstitious Sectarists*; and reject it, merely on the Foot of that unreasonable Surmise.—But, how can *You* be disgusted at the Expression, *Theron*; who have so often read it, in the most approved and judicious Writers? *St. Paul*, who might affirm with Relation to his Epistles, much more truly than the Painter concerning his Pourtraits, *I write for Eternity**; scruples not to use this awkward Language, several Times in the same Chapter †. *Milton*, the Correctness of whose Taste, and the Propriety of whose Style, no Person of Genius will ever question; delights to copy, in various Parts of his incomparable Poem, the Apostle's Diction.—Authorized by *such* Precedents, it is superior to Cavil, and warranted beyond all Exception.

As to the *Sentiment*, I take it to be the *very fundamental* Article of the Gospel: and I believe, whoever is acquainted with ecclesiastical History, will allow, that

* Alluding to the Painter, who, apologizing for the *slow* Procedure and scrupulously *nice* Touches of his Pencil, said; *Æternitati pingo, I paint for Eternity*. And those Strokes had need be correct, which are intended to survive, so long as Time itself shall last.

† *Rom. iv.* Where some Branch of the Word λογισθαι, to be imputed, occurs no less than ten or eleven Times.

that it bore the *principal Sway*, in extricating Us from Popish Darkneſs, and introducing the *Reformation*.—What ſays our LORD, with regard to the Love of GOD, and the Love of our Neighbour? *On theſe two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*. Much the ſame would I venture to ſay, concerning the Imputation of our Sins to CHRIST, and the Imputation of CHRIST's Righteouſneſs to Us: *On theſe two Doctrines, hang all the Privileges and the whole Glory of the Goſpel*.

Ther. In our laſt Converſation, I muſt own, I ſaw a ſtrong Reſemblance between the *Works* and the *Word* of GOD. But I never obſerved any Thing in Nature, that bore the leaſt *Analogy* to imputed Sin, or imputed Righteouſneſs.—To me your two Doctrines ſeem very unaccountable and irrational.

Aſp. That our Sins ſhould be charged upon the only begotten Son of GOD, and that his Righteouſneſs ſhould be made over to ſinful Worms, is ſtrange, exceeding ſtrange. The *Pſalmiſt* calls it, *marvelous Loving-Kindneſs**. The *Apoſtle* ſtyles it, *Love that paſſeth Knowledge*†. And it has ſometimes, I muſt freely confeſs, been almoſt ready to ſtagger my Belief.—However, I have found myſelf relieved in this Perplexity, not only by the *Teſtimonies* of *Scripture*, but even from the *Contemplation* of *Nature*. All Nature is full of ſtrange and myſterious Effects; conſequently, is a Voucher for the myſterious Truths of Chriſtianity.

How ſurpriſing are the Experiments of *Electricity*, and the occult Qualities of the *Loadſtone*! How ſurpriſing thoſe countless Legions of *Effluvia*, which tranſpire from a ſmall odoriferous Body! and thoſe

from

* Pſal. xvii. 7.

† Eph. iii. 19.

infinite Myriads of *luminous Particles*, which issue from a smaller flaming Substance *! There's not a Blade of Grass; but surpasses the Comprehension of all Mankind; and not a single Atom, but is big with Wonders.—Inſomuch, that the *intelligent* Observer can no where fix his Thoughts, without being aſtoniſhed, transported, and even loſt in Admiration.

Since the Procédure of Providence in this viſible System, is a continued Series of *ſtupendous* and *unſearchable* Operations; need We be alarmed, can We reaſonably be offended, if the Scheme of Redemption is equally ſtupendous, is far more amazing? Yet, though *amazing*, I hope, it will not appear, what You was pleaſed to inſinuate, *irrational*.

Suppoſe, We ſtate the Signification of the *Terms*; and adjust the Boundaries of our Subject, before We enter upon a Survey of its Contents?

Ther. Such a Caution would have prevented, at leaſt have ſhortened, many a vehement and tedious Controverſy.—You ſee, on yonder Heath, the Preparations for an approaching Race: There ſtand the *Poſts*; which are to mark out the Limits of the Courſe. Without this previous *reſtrictive* Care, how irregular would be the Excursions of the contending Steeds! How *difficult*, rather how *impoſſible*, to declare the Conqueror, and award the Prize!—A clear Definition of *Terms*, ſeems equally neceſſary for

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* Dr. *Nieuwentyt* has computed, That, from a lighted Candle, about the Size of ſix to the Pound, there iſſues, in the Second of a Minute, an Effuſion of Particles, vaſtly more than ten hundred thouſand million Times the Number of Sands, which the whole Globe of the Earth contains.—To call this a *very great* Multitude, would be ſaying little. It nonpluſes our *Thoughts*, and exceeds the utmoſt Stretch of *Imagination*!

candid Disputants. Without it, they may *wrangle* for Ages, and never come to a *Determination*.

Asp. *Justification* is an Act of GOD Almighty's Grace; whereby He acquits his People from Guilt, and accounts them righteous*; for the Sake of *CHRIST*'s Righteousness, which was wrought out for them, and is imputed to them.

Ther. Two of your Terms want some further Explanation. What do You understand by *CHRIST*'s Righteousness? And what is the Meaning of *imputed*?

Asp. By *CHRIST*'s Righteousness I understand, all the various Instances of his *active* and *passive* Obedience; springing from the perfect Holiness of his Heart; continued through the whole Course of his Life; and extending to the very last Pang of his Death.—By the Word *imputed* I would signify, That this Righteousness, though performed by our LORD, is *placed to our Account*; is reckoned or adjudged by GOD as *our own*. Insomuch, that We may *plead* it, and *rely* on it, for the Pardon of our Sins; for Adoption into his Family; and for the Enjoyment of Life eternal.—Shall I illustrate my Meaning by a well attested Fact?

Ther. Nothing gives Us so easy a Conception of any difficult Point, as this Method of explaining, by *parallel* Facts, or proper Similitudes.

Asp. I don't say the Case is parallel. I only produce it, to aid our Conceptions.—*Onesimus*, You know,

* Should any Reader object to the Definition; apprehending, that Justification implies no more, than *the Pardon of Sins*; I would desire Him to suspend his Judgment, till He has perused Dialogue X, where this Point is more circumstantially considered.

know, was *Philemon's* Slave *. He had perfidiously deserted his Master's Service, and still more perfidiously stole his Goods. The Fugitive, in his guilty Rambles, providentially meets with *St. Paul*. He is charmed and captivated with that gracious Gospel, which proclaims Mercy even for the vilest of Sinners. He becomes a thorough Convert to the Religion of *JESUS*, and is received into the spiritual Patronage of the Apostle. Who, learning his criminal Conduct, and obnoxious State, undertakes to bring about a Reconciliation, with his offended Master: dispatches Him, for this Purpose, with a Letter to *Philemon*: and amongst other Persuasives, writes thus in the poor Criminal's Behalf; *If He have wronged Thee, or oweth Thee ought, put that on mine Account. I Paul have written it with my own Hand; I will repay it.*

That, which the zealous Preacher of Christianity offered, the adored Author of Christianity executed.—*We* had revolted from the LORD of all Lords, and broke his holy Commandments. The Son of GOD, infinitely compassionate, vouchsafes to become our Mediator. That nothing might be wanting, to render his Mediation successful, He places Himself in our stead. The Punishment, which *We* deserved, *He* endures. The Obedience, which *We* owed, *He* fulfils.—Both which, being imputed to Us, and accepted for Us, are the Foundation of our Pardon, are the procuring Cause of our Justification.

Ther. Is this the exact Signification of the original Word, which *We* translate *imputed*?

* See the Epistle to *Philemon*.

Ass. In the Book of Numbers, We meet with this Phrase; and in such a Connection, as clears up its Meaning.—JEHOVAH enacts a Decree concerning the *Levites*; who had no Vintages to gather, nor any Harvests to reap. He directs them, to present the tenth Part of their Tythes, in the Form of a Heave-Offering: adding, *And this your Heave-Offering shall be reckoned * unto You, as though it were the Corn of the Threshing-Floor, and as the Fulness of the Wine-Press: as satisfactory to me, and as beneficial to You, as if it was the Tenth of your own Labours, and the Tythe of your own Increase.* — So, the expiatory Sufferings, which *CHRIST* endured; the complete Obedience, which
He

* Numb: xviii. 27. נחשב exactly answers to St. Paul's *λογισθη*, Rom. iv. 9.—The same Phrase is used, and the same Doctrine taught, Levit. xvii. 3, 4. *What Man soever there be of the House of Israel that killeth an Ox, or Lamb, or Goat in the Camp, or that killeth it out of the Camp; and bringeth it not unto the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, to offer unto the LORD an Offering before the Tabernacle of the LORD, Blood shall be imputed to that Man; He hath shed Blood; and that Man shall be cut off from among his People.*—Here was no Murder committed by the Offender, yet the Crime of Murder is charged, or as the Scripture speaks, *Blood is imputed to Him.* Lest Any should mistake the Meaning of this Expression, or not understand it in its due Latitude, the divine Law-giver is his own Interpreter; *He hath in the Eye of my Justice shed Blood: He shall pass for a Murderer, and be punished as a Murderer; He shall be cut off from among his People*—Thus also saith the eternal Judges concerning the Believers in *CHRIST*; “The Righteousness of my Son is imputed to them: they are in the Eye of my Justice righteous: they shall be dealt with, as righteous Persons; and made Partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

He performed; are reckoned to true Believers. And are altogether *as effectual*, for obtaining their Salvation, as if they were their own personal Qualifications.

Ther. The Imputation mentioned in your Passage, is the Imputation of something done by the *Levites themselves*, not of something done by *Another*. This, I apprehend, is the true Import of the Word, when it occurs affirmatively in Scripture.

Asp. This is *always* the Import—should have been said, in order to make the Objection forcible. But You could not so soon forget the Instance, just now alleged. *St. Paul*, speaking of the Crimes, which *Onesimus* had committed; and of the Injuries, which *Philemon* had sustained; says, “Charge them all on me*. I will be responsible, for the one, and for the other; as much, as if the whole Guilt had been of my own contracting.”—Here is supposed, not the Imputation of something done by the Apostle *Himself*, but of *Another’s* criminal Behaviour.

Under the Law, *Aaron* is commanded to put the Iniquities of *Israel* upon the Scape-Goat †.—The same Sentiment is re-inculcated, when the Goat is said to bear the Iniquities of the People ‡. This was plainly an Imputation; yet, could not possibly be the Imputation of any Thing done by the devoted Animal.—The *Effects* which took Place upon the Execution of the Ordinance, indicate a Translation of Guilt. For, the Congregation was cleansed, but the Goat polluted. The Congregation *so cleansed*, that their Iniquities were conveyed away, and to be found

E 3

no

* Εγὼ εἰληγοῦ. † Levit. xvi. 21. ‡ Levit. xvi. 22.

no more. The Goat *so polluted*, that it communicated Defilement to the Person, who conducted it into the Land not inhabited.—All this was GOD's own Appointment; and designed, like the whole System of *Mosaic Ceremonies*, to instruct his Church in the Knowledge of the great MEDIATOR: in whose Person and Office that was done *really*, which elsewhere could be done no otherwise than *typically*.

Ther. If this is your Meaning, *Aspasio*; I am apt to think, it will be a difficult Matter to make me a Profelyte. I must be content to pass for one of the stiff-necked Generation. Since, I can see neither *Wisdom* nor *Equity*, in ascribing to a Person, what He has not; or imputing to Him, what He does not.

Asp. It was not *Aspasio*, but his Friend, who set out with a View of making *Profelytes*. If I can maintain my Ground, and vindicate my own Belief, it will be no inconsiderable Acquisition.—However, I shall not despair of seeing the Partner of my Heart, become a Sharer of my Faith. When We are convinced of our *numberless Sins*; when We feel the *Depravity* of our *Nature*; and begin to discern the *inconceivable Sanctity* of our Judge; THEN, perhaps, this exploded Article may be found worthy of Acceptance—its Constitution admired, as the Wisdom of GOD—and its Privilege coveted, as the Consolation of our Souls.

Ther. I shall wave at present, an Examination of each Particular; and only make some *remote* Observations. Which seem, nevertheless, pretty nearly to affect your Scheme.—Many Persons, have scarce so much as *heard* of your Terms; have no manner of *Acquaintance* with your Doctrine. Will you strike off
all

all these from the List of Christians? Will you condemn all these as desperate Infidels?

Asp. Not heard of them!—In a Protestant Nation!—Where the Gospel is publicly preached, and the Bible in every One's Hands!—This, if true, is *much* to be lamented.—In Answer to your Question; It is not my Custom, much less is it my Prerogative, to condemn Others. Has GOD committed all Judgment unto me? That I should presume to anticipate the decisive Sentence, or launch the Thunder-bolts of eternal Vengeance?—Neither do I affirm the Condition of such Persons to be desperate. There may be *Those*, who have no *explicit* Knowledge of the Doctrine; who are even *disgusted* at the Expressions; yet live under the Belief of the Truth, and in the Exercise of the Duty.—“ They are never diverted, by the “ Splendor of any Thing that is *great*, or by the “ ceit of any Thing that is *good* in them, from looking upon themselves as *sinful* Dust and Ashes.” Their whole Dependence is upon *that JUST ONE*, who expired on the Cross, and whom the Heavens have received. They seek the *sanctifying* SPIRIT, in consequence of their Saviour's Death; and give all Diligence, to *add to their Faith Virtue*.

Ther. If People may be safe, and their eternal Interests secure, without any Knowledge of these Particularities; why should you offer to puzzle their Heads, about a few unnecessary *scholastic* Terms?

Asp. Scriptural Terms, You should have said, *Theron*.—However, We are not very solicitous, as to the Credit, or the Use, of any particular Set of Phrases. Only let Men be humbled, as *repenting Criminals*, at the REDEEMER's Feet: Let them rely, as *devoted*

Pensioners, on his precious Merits: and they are undoubtedly in the Way to a blissful Immortality.—Yet, will their Way be less clear, and their Steps more embarrassed, by not distinctly understanding the benign Genius of the Gospel. A proper Information in this Important Point, would shed *Light* upon their Paths, and *encourage* them in their Journey; would further their Progress in vital Holiness, and increase their Joy in the LORD.

Ther. The Followers of your Opinion, I have observed, are perpetually dwelling upon this *one favourite* Topic; to the Exclusion of that grand and truly essential Part of Christianity, *Sanctification*.

Asp. If You have ever taken notice of such a Conduct, You are unquestionably right, in withholding your Approbation. It is a manifest *Incongruity*, and deserves your *Censure*. But, assure Yourself, it proceeds from a Misapprehension in the Persons, and has no Connection with the Nature of the Doctrine.

I am far, very far from reducing the *various* Parts of Christianity, (which, when connected, make up so well-proportioned a System) to this *single*, however distinguished Branch. Sanctification is *equally necessary*, both to our present Peace, and to our final Felicity. Indeed, they are as reciprocally necessary, for the Purposes of *intellectual* and *eternal* Happiness; as the *Heart* and the *Lungs* are, to the Subsistence of the animal Oeconomy. The former must transmit, the latter must refine, the vital Fluid; or else, Disease will take Place, and Death will ensue.—My Intention is, that those *fundamental Truths* of the Gospel, like these *Master-Organs* in the Body, may have *each* its proper Office assigned; each concur to support the better

better Health, and to promote the spiritual Growth, of the Christian.

Ther. Other of your zealous Folks I have known, who are all for the *sanctifying* Influence of the SPIRIT; and reckon this Affiance on the SAVIOUR's Merits, among the beggarly Elements of Religion. They scarce ever mention, What *CHRIST* has done *for Us*; but insist wholly upon what He does *in Us*.—When the religious People are so divided among themselves *, how can a Stranger act? Which Opinion shall He choose?

Asp. Which, *Theron*! Let Him *discard* neither, but *associate* both.—If the all-gracious REDEEMER has poured out his Blood on the Cross, that my Guilt may be expiated; and presents his Intercession in Heaven, that I may be endued with the SPIRIT:—If He will be the *meritorious Cause* of my Justification, and the *operative Principle* of my Sanctification:—Why should I scruple to receive Him, in either, in both Capacities? Who would lop off the Right-hand, in order to impart the higher Dignity, or the greater Importance to the left? I would be no *Partialist* in Christianity: neither

* *Theron's Inquiry* concerning these *two* Particulars, is sometimes made an Objection against *all* Religion.—But have the Gentlemen, who adopt this Objection, never seen the *Naturalists* divided in their Judgment; with relation to the Design and Use of several Appearances in the material, the vegetable, the animal Creation? While One decries as a *Nuisance*, what another admires as a *Beauty*.—Yet no One, I believe, ever took it into his Head, from such a Diversity of Opinions, to *doubt* whether the Frame of Nature is a just, a regular, and a finished System: or to *deny*, That Power, Goodness, and Wisdom, support, pervade, and direct the Whole.

neither diminish her Dowry, nor mutilate her Privileges.

Ther. You seem, if not to mutilate, yet to *split* the Merits of *CHRIST*, and *parcel out* the Efficacy of his mediatorial Undertaking; ascribing so much to his active, and so much to his passive Righteousness; Pardon to *this*, and Life to *that*.

Asp. Some, I believe, are pleased with this Way of stating the Matter. But, it is a Method, that I neither attempt to defend, nor wish to imitate.—To *distinguish* between the active and passive Righteousness, I think, is not amiss. Because, this sets the Fullness of our LORD's Merit in the clearest Light; and gives the completest Honour to GOD's holy Law.—But to *divide* them into detached Portions, independent on each other, seems to be fanfiful, rather than judicious. For, had *either* Part of the mediatorial Obedience been *wanting*; I apprehend, neither Pardon, nor Acceptance, nor any spiritual Blessing, could have been vouchsafed to fallen Man.

The two *Parts* are inseparable; making, in their Connection, a necessary and noble *Whole* for the Accomplishment of our Salvation. Just as the Light and the Heat of yonder Sun, blend their Operation; to produce this delightful Day, and this fruitful Weather.—However, therefore, I may happen to express myself, I never consider them as acting in the *exclusive* Sense; but would always have them understood, as a grand and glorious *Aggregate*. Looking upon our SAVIOUR's universal Obedience, which commenced at his Incarnation; was carried on through his Life; and terminated in his Death;—looking upon all this, in
its

its *collective* Form, as the Object of my Faith, and the Foundation of my Hopes *.

Ther. I think, You lay too much Stress, upon this controverted, and perhaps *merely speculative* Point.

Asp. Merely speculative! Say not thus, my dear Friend. — *How I may be justified before GOD, my Maker, my Governor, and my Judge?* Is an Inquiry, of all others, the *most interesting and important*. It is the main Hinge, on which every Instance of practical Religion turns †. True Comfort, willing Obedience, holy Communion with the divine Majesty, *all* depend upon this capital Point.

Far from being a merely speculative Point, it ascribes the most *undivided* Glory to the ever-blessed GOD, and his free Grace.—It administers the most
serene

* In this Opinion, *Aspasio* has *Milton's* Arch-Angel for his Precedent. *Michael* speaking of his LORD and our LORD, says;

The Law of GOD exact he shall fulfil,
Both by Obedience and by Love, though Love
Alone fulfil the Law; thy Punishment
He shall endure, by coming in the Flesh
To a reproachful Life and cursed Death;
Proclaiming Life to all who shall believe
In his Redemption.

B. XII. 402.

According to the Tenour of these very valuable Lines, our LORD's Fulfilling the Law, and Enduring the Punishment, are the *concurring* Causes, or the one *compound Cause*, of Life and Redemption to Sinners.

† *Diffundit se*, says the judicious *Witsius*, *Justificationis Doctrina per totum Theologiæ Corpus; Et prout Fundamenta hic, vel bene, vel male, jacta sunt, eo universum Edificium vel solidius augustiusque ascendit, vel male statuminatum sædam minuitur Ruinam.*

De Oecon.

serene and substantial Satisfactions to frail, but believing Men.—It cherishes, with the most kindly Influence, that *pure and undefiled* Religion, which has its Seat in the Heart; has its Birth from Love; and is a real Antepast, both of the Business and the Bliss of Saints in Light.

Can We, then, lay too much Stress upon a Doctrine, so *greatly momentous*; upon a Privilege, so *extensively beneficial*?

Ther. When all this is *proved*, then for my Reply, *Aspasio.* Nay, then You shall have more than a Reply; I promise You my cordial Assent.

Asp. And if all this be incapable of Proof, I assure You, *Theron*, I will not solicit *your* Assent. Nay more, I will revoke and renounce *my own*.

Ther. At present, I believe, We must go in, and prepare for our Visitants. Some other Interview will give Us an Opportunity, to canvass this Question more minutely.

Asp. Though I have never *much Inclination*, even when there is the *most Leisure*, for Controversy; yet, if You insist upon it, I shall not absolutely refuse to engage in a Debate with my *Theron*. Because, He will come to the amicable Rencontre, without bringing *angry Passions* for his Second.—My Reasons will be impartially weighed, not artfully eluded, much less answered with Invective.—If some inadvertent Expression should drop from my Lips, He will not rigorously prosecute the Slip; nor aggravate an unguarded Sentence into the Crime of Heresy.—Candour will form his Judgment, and Good-nature dictate his Expressions.

Ther.

Ther. I thank You, my dear *Aspasio*, for your gentle Admonition. What *I am*, in the Language of Complaisance, means, What *I should be*. — Well : I will endeavour to take your Hint, and check this Impetuosity of my Spirit. I have often admired, O ! that I could imitate, the beautiful Example of *St. Paul*. When *Festus*, forgetting the Dignity of the Governor, and the Politeness of the Gentleman, uttered that indecent Reflection ; *Paul*, *thou art beside thyself : much Learning doth make Thee mad*. Did the great Preacher of Christianity kindle into Resentment ? — The Charge was *unjust* and *abusive*. But the Apostle, with the most perfect Command of Himself, returned the *softest*, yet the *most spirited* Answer imaginable. *I am not mad, most noble Festus ; but speak the Words of Truth and Soberness* *. — Inexpressibly graceful was this calm and obliging Reply. Though short, infinitely more convincing than a whole Torrent of *bitter* or *recriminating* Words. It disarmed the Judge of his rising Displeasure ; it conciliated the Favour of his royal Assessor ; and brought Honour to the christian Cause.

This amiable *Self-Regimen*, and Moderation of Temper, I shall be sure to see exemplified in my Friend's

* See *Acts* xxvi. Where We have an *Apology*, the noblest, perhaps, that ever was made ; eminent for *fine Address*, *clear Reasoning*, and the most *important Truth*. Which, notwithstanding all its very superior Recommendations, is deemed *Madness* : and that, by a Nobleman from *Rome* ; the Seat of Science, and Fountain-Head of polite Literature. — A Proof this, no less demonstrative than deplorable, of the Apostle's Assertion ; *The natural Man*, however ingenious or accomplished, *receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of GOD ; for they are Foolishness unto Him*, 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Friend's Conversation ; however I may fail of it myself, or be Proof against all his Arguments.

Ass. Ah! *Theron*, We want no Monitor, to remind Us of our *supposed* Excellencies. And if You begin with your Compliments, it is Time to put an End to our Discourse.

Only let me just observe, That *divine Truths* cannot be properly discerned, but by the enlightening Influences of the *divine SPIRIT*. We must address Ourselves to this Inquiry, not only with *unprejudiced Minds*, but likewise with *praying Hearts*. We must bring to this Dispute, not barely the Quiver of Logic, but that *Unction from the HOLY ONE*, which may teach Us all Things*.—Let Us then adopt the Poet's Aspiration ;

————— *Thou celestial Light,*
Shine inward, and the Mind through all her Powers
Irradiate ; there plant Eyes ; all Mist from thence
Purge and disperse ! Milton, B. III. 51.

* † John ii. 20, 27.





DIALOGUE III.

THERON.

WE are now, *Aspasio*, about two Miles distant from my House. The Horse-Road lies through a narrow dusty Lane. The Foot-Path leads along a spacious pleasant *Meadow*. Suppose, We deliver our Horses to the Servant, and walk the Remainder of the Way?

Asp. Nothing can be more suitable to my Inclination. Especially, as the Air is become cool, and the Walk is so inviting.

What a magnificent and charming Scene! *Hills*, on either Side, gently rising, and widely spreading. Their *Summits*, crowned with scattered Villages, and clustering Trees. Their *Slopes*, divided into a beautiful Chequer-Work; consisting partly of Tillage, with its waving Crops; partly of Pasturage, with its grazing Herds.—*Before Us*, the Trefoil, the Clover, and a Variety of grassy Plants, differently bladed, and differently branched, weave themselves into a *Carpet* of living Green. Can any of the

Manu-

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Manufactures formed in the Looms, or extended in the Palaces of *Persia*, vie with the Covering of this ample Area? Vie with it; in *Grandeur* of Size, or *Delicacy* of Decoration?

What a Profusion of the gayest Flowers, fringing the Banks, and embroidering the Plain!

Nature Here

Wantons as in her Prime, and plays at Will
Her Virgin-fancies, pouring forth more Sweet,
Wild above Rule or Art, enormous Bliss! Milt.

Nothing can be brighter, than the Lustre of those silver *Daisies*; nothing deeper, than the Tinge of those golden *Crowfoots*. Yet, both seem to acquire additional Beauty, by succeeding to the Deformity of Winter, and flourishing amidst so much surrounding Verdure.

Ther. Nature is truly in *her Prime*.—The vegetable Tribes are putting on their richest Attire. Those *Chestnuts*, on our Right-hand, begin to rear their flowering Pyramids; those *Willows*, on our left, are tipt with Tassels of Grey; and yonder *Poplars*, that overlook the River, and seem to command the Meadows, are pointed with Rolls of Silver.

The *Hawthorn*, in every Hedge, is partly tinged with silken Gems, partly diffused into a milk-white Bloom. Not a stragling *Furze*, nor a solitary *Thicket*, but wears a rural Noddy. All is a delightful Display of present Fertility, and a joyous Pledge of future Plenty.—Now we experience what the royal Poet, in very agreeable Imagery, describes: *The Winter is past; the Rain is over and gone. The Flow-*

DIALOGUE III. 65

ers appear on the Earth; the Time of the Singing of Birds is come; and the Voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land. The Fig-Tree putteth forth her Green Figs; and the Vine with the tender Grapes give a good Smell*.

Asp. Your Quotation and the Scene remind me of a Remark, that should have been admitted into our last Night's Discourse. When we were enumerating the Excellencies of the sacred Writings, methinks, we might have added;—Are you fond of *Pastoral*, in all its flowery Graces, and blooming Honours? Never have we seen such exquisite Touches of rural Painting, or such sweet Images of endeared Affection, as in *The Song of Songs which is Solomon's*. All the brilliant and amiable Appearances in Nature are employed, to delineate the Tenderness of his Heart, who is *Love* itself—to pourtray the Beauty of his Person, who is *The chiefest among ten thousand*—and describe the Happiness of those Souls, whose Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son **JESUS CHRIST**†.

See! *Theron*, what the chearing Warmth and the genial Showers of Spring have done! *Such a Change*, so pleasing and so ennobling, the Gospel of **CHRIST** introduces into the Soul.—Not a Day, scarce an Hour passes, but this Season of universal Fecundity produces *Something new*. And is there any State, or any Circumstance of Life, on which the Faith of **CHRIST** does not exert a similar Efficacy, and bring forth Fruit unto **GOD**?

This is supposed to be the *spiritual* Meaning of that fine descriptive Picture, which You have borrowed from

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the

* Cant. ii. 11, 12, 13. † 1 John i. 3.

the *Canticles*. It displays the *benign Agency* of Grace and its Doctrines; especially, of our *LORD's* Satisfaction for Sin, and of his Righteousness imputed to Sinners. These operate, with much the same favourable and happy Energy, both on our Morals and our Comforts; as the *sweet Influences* of the vernal Sun operate, on the sprouting Herbs, and opening Flowers.

Ther. If *such* were the Effects of your Doctrine, it would stand the fairer Chance for general Acceptation.—But there are several weighty Scruples to be removed, before Persons of a *liberal* and *enlarged* Way of Thinking, can acquiesce in your Opinion. Who, for Instance, can persuade Himself, that what You call *The Satisfaction of CHRIST*, is consistent with the Dictates of Reason, or with the Perfections of the DEITY?

Ans. Let Gentlemen be candid in their Inquiries, and *truly* liberal in their Way of Thinking; then, I flatter myself, these Scruples may be removed, without much Difficulty.

GOD, the almighty Creator, and supreme Governor of the World, having made Man, gave Him a Law; with a *Penalty* annexed, in Case of Disobedience.—This sacred Law our Fore-father *Adam* presumptuously broke; and *We*, his Posterity, were *involved* in his Guilt. Or, should that Point be controverted, We have undeniably made, by many personal Transgressions, *his Apostacy our own*.—Inasmuch, that all have sinned; have forfeited their Happiness, and rendered themselves obnoxious to Punishment.

Man

DIALOGUE III. 67

Man being thus ruined, none could recover Him, except his injured Maker. But shall He be recovered, shall He be restored, without suffering the Punishment, *due* to his Crime, and *threatened* by his Creator?—What then will become of the *Justice* of the divine Lawgiver? And how shall the *Honour* of his holy Law be maintained? At this rate, who would reverence its Authority, or fear to violate its Precepts?—Sinners might be emboldened to multiply their Transgressions; and tempted to think, that the GOD of immaculate Holiness, the GOD of unchangeable Veracity, is *altogether such an One as themselves* *.

Does it not appear needful, that *some* Expedient be devised, in order to prevent these dishonourable and horrid Consequences?

Ther. Proceed to inform Us, what the Expedient is.

Asp. To ascertain the *Dignity* of the supreme Administration, yet *rescue* Mankind from utter *Destruction*, this admirable Purpose was formed, and in the Fulness of Time executed. The *second Person* of the ever blessed TRINITY unites the human Nature to the divine; *submits* Himself to the *Obligations* of his People; and becomes *responsible* for all their *Guilt*. In this Capacity, He performs a perfect Obedience, and

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* This was actually the Case, as We are informed by the Searcher of Hearts, when, on a particular Occasion, Punishment was only *retarded*. How much more would such impious Opinions have prevailed, if, on this grand Act of Disobedience, Punishment had been intirely *borne*? P^{sa}. l. 21.

undergoes the Sentence of Death: makes a full Expiation of their Sins, and re-establishes their Title to Life.—By which means, the Law is satisfied; Justice is magnified; and the richest Grace exercised. Man enjoys a *great Salvation*, not to the Discredit of *any*, but to the unspeakable Glory of *all*, the divine Attributes.

This is what We mean by *CHRIST's* Satisfaction. And this, I should imagine, wants no Recommendation to our *unprejudiced Reason*; as, I am sure, it is most delightfully accommodated to our *distressed Condition*.—It is also confirmed by many *express Passages* of Scripture, and illustrated by a Variety of very *significant Images*.

Ther. Pray, let me be favoured with some of your scriptural Images.—After which, We may inquire, whether your Doctrine will stand the Test of Reason.

Asp. What is your Notion of a *Ransom*? When *Priam* redeemed the dead Body of *Hector* from the victorious *Achilles*, how was it done?

Ther. By paying a *Price**.—Thus *Fabius* recovered the Captives, that were taken by *Hannibal*. He transmitted the Sum required, and they were discharged from their Confinement.

Asp. Such is the Redemption, procured for Sinners by our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*. Of such a Nature,

an infinitely rich Price. Hyperbolical this, as applied by *Homer*: strictly true, when referred to *CHRIST*.

Nature, (though incomparably more grand and august in all its Circumstances) and expressed by the very *same* Word *. *The Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give his Life a Ransom for Many.*

CHRIST also paid a Price — a real Price — a most satisfactory Price. In Consideration of which, our Freedom from every penal Evil is granted. *Ye are redeemed †, says the Apostle, not with corruptible Things, Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of CHRIST.* — Let me add one Text more; which, in the same Style of commutative Justice, asserts the same Truth. *CHRIST has redeemed Us ‡, hath brought Us off, from the Curse of the Law.* — Yes, my Friend,

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The

* *Λυτρον, απολυτρον*, are used in this precise Signification, by the most approved Authors of Greece. — *Απιπινει τα λυτρα τω Αντιπα, η τες αυχμαλωτες απαλαβει*, says *Plutarch*. *Ο υιος τε ανθρωπου ηλθε δειναι την ψυχην αυτου λυτρον αντι πολλων*, says our blessed Saviour, *Matt. xx. 28.* — *Απολυτρωσι ταλαντων ενια*, is the Language of *Demosthenes*. *Εν ω εχομεν την απολυτρωσιν δια τας αμαρτιας αυτες*, are the Words of *St. Paul*, *Eph. i. 7.* — To establish this important Point, and to familiarize the comfortable Idea to our Minds, the sacred Writers abound in this Phraseology. See *Luke i. 68. ii. 38. xxiv. 21.* — *Rom. iii. 34.* — *Tis. ii. 24.* — *Heb. ix. 12.*

† *1 Pet. i. 18.* We have an equivalent Expression, used in the same Signification, by one of the correctest Writers in the World;

Et Fratrem Pollux alterna Morte redemit. VIRG.

‡ *Gal. iii. 13.* *Εξηγορασιν* — We are said to be bought, *1 Cor. vi. 20.* Not in a metaphorical Sense, but really and properly. For, here the Price is mentioned; and by *St. Peter* the Price is specified, *1 Pet. i. 18, 19.*

*The Ransom was paid down. The Fund of Heav'n,
Heav'n's inexhaustible exhausted Fund,
Amazing and amaz'd, pour'd forth the Price,
All Price beyond. Though curious to compute
Arch-Angels fail'd to cast the mighty Sum*.*

Ther. Hold a little, good *Aspasio*. Consider the Consequence of what You maintain. If there was a Ransom in the Case, to *Whom* was it paid? — The Devil had led Sinners captive. They are said to be the Slaves of Satan. And shall the blessed *JESUS* pay his Life to that accursed Fiend? Shocking to imagine! — Yet, shocking as it is, it must follow from your own, and your Poet's Assertion.

Asp. You misapprehend the Case, *Theron*. The Ransom was paid to GOD. *Thou hast redeemed Us to GOD †*, is the Confession of the Saints in Light. — Satisfaction was made to the divine Law, and to the divine Justice. The one of which was offended; the other violated; and both concurred to denounce the Transgressor's Doom. — Of which Doom Satan was the destined Executioner. Whose Malignity, and implacable Rage, GOD is pleased to make the Instrument of inflicting his Vengeance. As He formerly used the idolatrous Kings of *Affyria* and *Babylon*, to chastise the disobedient *Israelites*.

When We were without Strength ‡, utterly ruined, yet absolutely helpless — when None, in Heaven or Earth, could afford Us any Succour — then our LORD *JESUS CHRIST* most graciously and

* Night-Thoughts, N°. IV.

† Rev. v. 6.

‡ Rom. v. 9.

most seasonably interposed. He *said*, as it is very emphatically represented by *Elihu*; *Deliver them from going down into the Pit; I have found a Ransom* *. He *did*, what is very beautifully described by our *English Classic*;

————— So Man, as is most just,
Shall satisfy for Man, be judg'd, and die;
And dying rise, and rising with Him raise
His Brethren, ransom'd with his own dear Life.

Milton, B. iii. 294.

Ther. But pray, do not You allow, that *CHRIST* is truly and properly *GOD*?

Asp. We not only allow it, but We insist upon it, and make our Boast of it. This is the very Foundation of *his* Merit, and the Support of *our* Hope.

Ther. This may aggrandize the Merit of *CHRIST*, but it will increase the Difficulty of your Task. For, according to this Opinion, *CHRIST* must make Satisfaction to *Himself*. And is not this a Practice quite unprecedented? A Notion perfectly absurd?

Asp. It is quite unprecedented, You say.—On this Point, I shall not vehemently contend. Only let me mention one Instance. *Zaleucus*, You know, the Prince of the *Locrians*, made a Decree, That whoever was convicted of Adultery, should be punished with the Loss of both his Eyes. Soon after this Establishment, the Legislator's own Son was apprehended in the very Fact, and brought to a public Tryal.—How could the Father acquit Himself, in so

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tender

tender and delicate a Conjunction?—Should He *execute* the Law, in all its Rigour? This would be worse than Death to the unhappy Youth.—Should He *pardon* so notorious a Delinquent? This would defeat the Design of his salutary Institution.—To avoid both these Inconveniencies, He ordered one of his own Eyes to be pulled out, and one of his Sons. By which means, the *Rights* of *Justice* were preserved inviolate; yet the *Tenderness* of a *Parent* was remarkably indulged. And may We not venture to say, That, in this Case, *Zaleucus* both received and made the Satisfaction?—*received* it, as a Magistrate; even while He *made* it, as a Father,

Ther. I cannot see, how this Suffering of the Father was, in any Degree, *satisfactory* to the Law: since the Father and the Son could not be considered, as *one* and the *same* Person. It may pass for an extraordinary Instance of parental Indulgence. It may strike the benevolent and compassionate Hearer. But, if tried at the Bar of Equity and Reason, it will hardly be admitted as any *legal Satisfaction*: it will probably be condemned, as a Breach of Nature's first and fundamental Law, *Self-Preservation*.

Asp. What You observe, *Theron*, I must confess, has Weight. It will oblige me to give up my Illustration.—Nevertheless, what You urge against the *Propriety* of the Comparison, tends to establish the Certainty of the Doctrine. For, *CHRIST* and his People are actually considered, as one and the same Person. They are *one* mystical *Body*: He the Head, they the Members: so intimately united to Him, that they are, *Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of his Flesh*.—By virtue of which Union, their Sins were punished

in Him; and by his Stripes they are healed *, they obtain Impunity and Life.

Though there may be nothing in the Procedure of Men, which bears any *Resemblance* to this Miracle of heavenly Goodness; it receives a sufficient Confirmation from the Language of Scripture. He, who wrote as an Amanuensis to the unerring SPIRIT, has declared; That GOD was in CHRIST, reconciling the World—unto Whom? Unto some third Party? No; but reconciling it, by the Death and Obedience of CHRIST, unto Himself †. And I can very readily grant, that this divine Exertion of Benignity and Wisdom, should be without a Precedent, and without a Parallel ‡.

Difficulties, I own, may attend the Explication of this Article, or be interwoven with its Consequences.—At the same Time I must affirm, That our Apprehensions of heavenly Things are so *obscure*, and our Ideas of the divine Benevolence so *scanty*, that We may very possibly mistake; and fancy that to be absurd, which is only *great, wonderful, and incomprehensible* §.—Nor shall I be thought presumptuous in adding; That it will be impossible, for all the Sagacity

* Isai. liii. 5. † 2 Cor. v. 19. Col. i. 20.

‡ *Fancy*, in the Person of *Horace*, said of *Jupiter* and his fabulous Exploits,

Cui nihil wiget simile aut secundum.

Much more will *Reason*, in the Character of a Believer, say the same of JEHOVAH and his marvelous Grace.

¶ Its unparalleled, nay, its incomprehensible Nature, is no Objection to its Truth and Reality. This is rather a Circumstance, which perfectly agrees with the Testimony of the inspired Writers; and affords, in my Opinion, an

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city in the World, to prove this Doctrine an *Absurdity*, though it should ever remain an *inexplicable Mystery*.—How many Phænomena in the Constitution of external Nature, are confessedly mysterious and inexplicable! They *challenge*, they *command* our Assent; yet *baffle* all our Researches, and *defy* our utmost Penetration. If then We find this Truth, fully and incontestably revealed in the Bible, We must renounce the *Philosopher*, before We can *consistently* act the *Sceptic*.

Ther. Let Us see then, Whether it be so fully and incontestably revealed in the Bible.—You have given me, as yet, but *one* of your scriptural Images.

Asp. I have another at your Service.—*CHRIST* is called an *Higb-Priest*. What do You take to be the Nature of the Priestly Office?

Ther. The Business of the Priest was, I apprehend, To *offer Sacrifices*, and to *make Intercession* for the People.

Asp. Very true: and *CHRIST* could not, with any Propriety, receive this Apellation, if He had been

unanswerable *Argument* for the divine Origin of Christianity.

It agrees with the *Testimony* of the inspired Writers; who call it, not only *GOD's Wisdom*, by Way of supereminent Distinction, but *his Wisdom in a Mystery*, even *his hidden Wisdom*: which could not possibly have been conceived by any finite Mind, however enlarged or sagacious.—Is an *Argument* for the divine Origin of Christianity. Since it was infinitely too deep for the Contrivance of Men, and absolutely *undiscoverable* by the Penetration of Angels; how could it be known, but by Manifestation from above? Whence could it take its Rise, but from an *especial Revelation*?

been defective in performing *either* of the sacerdotal Functions.—Now, that he offered no such Victim as *slain Beasts*, is universally acknowledged. We might presume therefore, even though We had not the Authority of an Apostle to assure Us, That *He offered Himself, through the eternal SPIRIT to GOD.*

The Cross, shall I say *? Rather his divine Nature was the *Altar*. His Soul and Body, each immaculately pure, were the *Holocaust*. These He resigned; the one, to deadly Wounds; the other, to inexpressible Anguish; and both, to be instead of all *whole Burnt-Offerings*.—On this invaluable Oblation; his Intercession at the Right-hand of his FATHER is founded: from this it derives that prevailing Efficacy, which is the Security of his *standing*, and the Recovery of his *fallen* Disciples.

Give me Leave to ask farther; What is your Idea of a *Sacrifice*? When *Iphigenia* was slain at the Altar, What was the Import of that memorable Action?

Ther. It was intended, if We may credit *Virgil's* Account †, to *appease* the Indignation of the superior Powers;

* The *Cross* is, by some Authors, styled The *Altar*. But, I think, improperly. This Notion seems to have sprung from, or given rise to, the *Papish* Practice of idolizing the *Crucifix*. At least, it countenances such a Kind of *sappish* or *sacrilegious* Devotion, more than a Protestant Writer could wish.—It was the Property of the Altar, to *sanctify the Gift*. This therefore, when referred to our LORD's Sacrifice, is a far more exalted Office, than We dare ascribe to the *Instrument* of his Suffering. This must be the Honour and Prerogative of his *divine Nature*, which did indeed sanctify the great Oblation: gave it a Dignity, a Merit, an Efficacy, unspeakable and everlasting.

† *Sanguine placasti Ventos, & Virgine cœsâ.*

Powers; and to obtain a *propitious* Gale for the wind-bound Fleet, and confederate Forces of *Greece*. But, I hope, You would not make that solemn Butchery of the royal Virgin, a Pattern for the supreme Goodness; nor the Practice of gross Idolaters, a Model for the Religion of the holy *JESUS*.

Asp. By no means, *Theron*. Only I would observe—That the Custom of offering Sacrifices obtained, among the most *cultivated* Nations of the Heathen World—That these Sacrifices were frequently of the *vicarious** Kind; in which the Victim was substituted, instead of the Offerer; and the One being cut off, the Other was discharged from Punishment—Consc-

* *Seneca* says, alluding to the Custom of Sacrifices, and the prevailing Opinion concerning them; *Fuerim tantum nunquam amplius dolitura Domus Piamantum*.—What we are to understand by *Piamantum*, our Author himself explains, in the preceding Clause; *Quicquid Matri dolendum fuerit, in me transferit; quicquid Aviae, in me*. To which his judicious Commentator *Lipsius*, from an extensive Knowledge of Antiquity, adds; *nabagua sive piacularis Victima*. Sen. ad Helv.

The same Writer, in the same consolatory Epistle, has another Sentence, still more to our Purpose; *Nobilatur omnium Carminibus, quæ se pro Coniuge vicariam dedit*.—*Juvenal* speaking of this very Fact, expresses Himself in very remarkable Language. Such as shews Us, with the utmost *Clearness* and *Precision*, what the Antients meant, when they affirmed of a suffering or dying Person, That *He gave Himself for Another*:

*Spestat subeuntem Fata Mariti
Alcestim, Et similis si Permutatio detur.*

Sat. VI.

There is a Passage in *Livy*, which most of all deserves our Notice. As it seems to imply a popular Belief of the

—Consequently, that the *Classic* Authors would (in case there was any Need of such Auxiliaries) join with the sacred Writers, to declare the *Expediency*, and explain the *Nature* of Sacrifices.—This also You will permit me to add, That, if the Heathens talk sensibly on any Part of religious Worship, it is on the Subject of Sacrifices. Their Sentiments concerning expiatory Oblations, seem to be the *faint* and *distant* Echo of Revelation. And I have usually considered them, not as the Institutions of mere Reason, but as the Remains of some broken Tradition.

However, the truest and most authentic Signification of a Sacrifice, is to be learned from the *Jewish Ritual*, explained by the *Gospel Comment*. Do You remember the *Mosaic* Account of that Ordinance?

Ther. You are much better acquainted, *Aspasio*, with those *sacred Antiquities*; and can give the most satisfactory Information, with regard to this Particular. Only let me remind You, That *Alms* are styled *Offerings*; and *Praises*, both in the prophetical and evangelical Writings, come under the Denomination of *Sacrifices*.

Asp. Though Praises and Alms are styled Sacrifices, they are not of the *propitiatory*, but *eucharistic* Kind. They are never said to *expiate* Transgressions, only are represented as *acceptable* to GOD through
JE.

the Dignity, the more than human Dignity, of the Sacrifice which was necessary to appease the Wrath of Heaven. It relates to *Decius*, devoting Himself for the public Good; *Conspectus ab utraque Acie*, aliquanto augustior humano Visu, *sicuti Cælo missus*, *Piaculum omnis Deorum Iræ*.
 Lib. VIII. c. 9.

JESUS CHRIST; that divinely precious Victim, whose Merits both cancel our Guilt, and commend our Services! According to—

Ther. Stay a Moment, *Aspasio*.—Let me recollect myself.—This may be the Meaning of Sacrifices, as ordained by *Moses*, and solemnized among the *Jews*.—“Sacrifices were a symbolical Address to GOD; intended to express before Him the Devotion, Affections, Dispositions and Desires of the Heart by significative and emblematical Actions.”—Or thus; “The Priest made Atonement for Sin, by sacrificing a Beast, *only* as that was a Sign and Testimony of the Sacrificer’s pure and upright Heart.”

Asp. Sacrifices, I acknowledge, were a symbolical Address to GOD.—But would You confine their Efficacy, *only* to the Death of the Animal, and the Purity of the Offerer? No, *Theron*; they always had a Reference to the great Sacrifice—*ordained* in the eternal Counsels of JEHOVAH—*prepared*, when the co-eternal SON was made Flesh—*offered*, when the blessed JESUS surrendered Himself, to be led as a Lamb to the Slaughter.—They were so far from being *independent* on this divine Oblation, that they acted in *perpetual* Subserviency to it, and derived *all* their Virtue from it. They were the Shadow, but the Body was CHRIST.

They expressed, You say, *the Devotion, Affections, Dispositions, and Desires of the Heart*. But I rather think, they expressed the Guilt and the Faith of the Offerer.—*His Guilt*; for this seems to be intimated, by the very *Names* of the propitiatory Sacrifices. The Sin and the Sacrifice, the offending Action and the expiatory Rite, being signified by one and the same

same Word *. It is somewhat more than intimated, by the *Occasion* of the Offering, and the *State* of the Offerer. Since it was only on account of Guilt contracted, that piacular Oblations were made; and only from a guilty Person, that they were required. —*His Faith*; or firm Belief, that *ceremonial* Guilt, which shut Him out from the Communion of the visible Church, and subjected Him to the Infliction of temporal Judgments, was removed by *these*; but that *moral* Guilt, which defiles the Soul, and excludes from Heaven, should be purged by *some better Sacrifice than these* †. In the Exercise of this Faith, *Abel* offered up a more acceptable Sacrifice than *Cain*; and without this Faith, exercised in some Degree, it is impossible to please GOD.

If Sacrifices were intended to bespeak *Integrity of Heart*, methinks, the State of *Innocency* had been the properest Period, for their Institution and Oblation. But We never hear of this awful Ceremony, till Man is fallen, and Sin committed.—If intended to denote *Purity of Heart*, why should they be particularly enjoined on that solemn Day, when Confession was made of *all the Sins* ‡, of the whole Congregation? An oddly concerted Device this! In which the Tongue must contradict, what the Ceremony would recognize.—Or, how could it be proper, after the Violation of some Law, or the *Neglect* of some Ordinance, immediately to go and offer a Sacrifice?

* *חטאת* denotes a Sin, and Sin-Offering. Levit. iv. 3, 24. *עוון* signifies the Trespass, and the Trespass-Offering. Levit. v. 15, 19.

† They sanctified to the purifying of the Flesh, Heb. ix. 13. But could not make Him that did the Service perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience. Heb. ix. 9.

‡ Levit. xvi. 21.

crifice? What would be the Language of such a Practice? "I have done *wickedly*, but my Heart is *pure and upright*." Is this consistent with the Spirit of Humility, of Modesty, or of common Ingenuity? Is this the Way of *giving Glory* to GOD, or of *taking Shame* to ourselves?—Whereas, let the Sacrifice be a typical Expiation, and this is the Significancy of the Action. "LORD, I confess myself *guilty*. Punishment and Death are *my Due*. "Let them fall, I beseech Thee, on *my Victim**. "That thy Justice being glorified, and thy Law satisfied, thy Mercy may be honourably displayed *in my Forgiveness*."

Besides, *Theron*; What *Likeness*, what *Agreement* is there, between the Profession of Integrity, and an Animal mortally wounded; wallowing in its own Blood; and struggling in the Agonies of Death?—Whereas, between these dying Pangs, and the Punishment due to Sin, or the Sorrows sustained by the crucified SAVIOUR, there is an *apparent*, a *striking*, and, in various Respects, an *edifying* Resemblance.

Ther. They declared, perhaps, the Sacrificer's Readiness and Resolution, to *slay* the *Brute* in Himself, and to *lay down* his *Life* in Adherence to GOD.

Asp. I don't remember any Assertion of this Kind in the Bible, or any Hint to countenance such an Interpretation. It seems, in *some Cases*, to be *incompatible* with the very Nature of Things, and *contrary* to the

* What says, that Prodigy of oriental Learning, Bochart? *Hoc eodem Ritu Iram Dei Peccator deprecabatur, eamque immitti petebat in illius Victimæ Caput, quam suo Loco ponebat.*

the exprefs Declarations of Scripture.—*Doves*, You know, *Lambs*, and *Sheep* were offered in Sacrifice. But shall We flay the Lamb, the Dove, the Sheep in Ourselves? So far from it, that *CHRIST*'s Disciples are either described by these Creatures, or commanded to imitate their Properties. *Be ye harmless as Doves* *. Peter, *feed my Lambs* †. *My Sheep, hear my Voice* ‡.

Supposing, however, that this might be a subordinate Design, or a valuable Improvement of the sacrificial Acts; yet their primary Intention, and ultimate End, were widely different: were much more significant of the divine Compassions, and much better adapted to the Comfort of Mankind. They were—An awful Indication, that Death was the Wages of Sin: At the same Time, a cheering Declaration, that GOD was pleased to accept the Death of the Animal, instead of the Sinner's: a figurative Representation || also of that illustrious Person, who was to bear the Sin of many, and pour out his Soul for Transgressors.

Ther. Since Sacrifices were of a religious Nature, they should not only be instructive and beneficial in their Tendency; but have their due Effects, with regard to GOD, to Sin, and to the Person who brought them.

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Asp.

* Matt. x. 16. † John xxi. 15. ‡ John x. 27.

|| What says *Milton* upon this Subject of Sacrifices, and with reference to their principal Design? He calls them

Religious Rites

*Of Sacrifice; informing Men by Types
And Shadows, of that destin'd Seed to bruise
The Serpent, by what means He shall achieve
Mankind's Deliverance.*

B. XII. 231.

Asp. They had their Effects *with regard to GOD*; that his Justice might be magnified, and his Anger appeased—to Sin; that its Demerit might be displayed, yet its Guilt be done away—to the Person who brought them; that he might obtain Pardon, be exempted from Punishment, and exercise his Faith on the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Ther. There are so many Sorts of Sacrifice, appointed in the *Jewish Rubric*, that I am at a loss for a *distinct Idea*; unless some one be singled out, and separately considered.

Asp. Among all the Sacrifices instituted by *Moses*, none more circumstantially typified the blessed JESUS, or more appositely expressed the Benefits of his Oblation, than the *Paschal Lamb*, and the *Sin-Offering*.

An Expositor, who cannot be mistaken, has given Us this Interpretation of the Paschal Lamb; *CHRIST our Passover is sacrificed for Us* *. Declaring hereby —That

* 1. Cor. v. 7. Would any One venture to say? *Paul our Passover is sacrificed for Us*. Yet this, I think, *may be*, or rather *is* in effect said, by the Account which some Persons give of *CHRIST's Satisfaction*.—The very Thought of such a blasphemous Absurdity, is too *painful and offensive* for the serious Christian to dwell upon. I would therefore divert his Attention to a more pleasing Object. Let Him observe the exquisite *Skill*, which, here and every where, conducts the Zeal of the inspired Writer.—The Odes of *Pindar* are celebrated for their *fine Transitions*; which, though bold and surprising, are perfectly natural. We have, in this Place, a very masterly Stroke of the same beautiful Kind. The Apostle, speaking of the *incessuous Criminal*, passes, by a most artful Digression, to his darling Topic, a crucified SAVIOUR. Who.

D I A L O G U E I I I . 83

—That *CHRIST* is a *real* Sacrifice—That He was *presfigured*, in this Capacity, by the Paschal Lamb—That the *Circumstances*, which distinguished it, met in Him; and the *Advantages*, which resulted from it, were procured by Him: *those*, in their truest Import; *these*, in their largest Extent.—The Words of the Apostle speak this Sense, to the *plainest simplest* Reader. Whereas, to extort any other Signification from them, what Subtilty of Wit, and what *Refinement*, or rather *Violence* of Criticism, must be used!

The Paschal Lamb was *without Blemish*. Such was the Lamb of GOD: free from all Taint of original Sin, and from every Spot of actual Transgression.—A Lamb of *the first Year*, in all the Sprightliness and Floridity of Youth. *CHRIST* also laid down his Life, not when worn with Age, and scarce worth the keeping; but in the very Prime of his Days; amidst all the Bloom and Vigour of Manhood.—The Lamb was to be slain in such a Manner, as might occasion the most *copious Effusion* of its Blood. And was not this very exactly fulfilled in our suffering SAVIOUR? His Blood flowed out, in vast Abundance, by the amazing *Sweat* in the Garden; by the rending Lashes of the *Scourge*; by the lacerating Points of the *Thorns*; by the dreadful *Nails*, which cleft his Hands and his Feet; by the deadly *Spear*, which ripped open his Side, and cut its Way to his Heart.—Though the Blood was to be so liberally spilt, a *Bone* of the Lamb *was not to be broken*. And you cannot but recollect, You cannot

G 2

but

Who would have expected it, on such an Occasion? Yet, when *thus* admitted, who does not see and admire, both the Propriety of the Subject, and the Delicacy of its Introduction?

but admire, the wonderful Interposition of Providence, to accomplish this *emblematical Prediction*. When the Soldiers had received a Command, to break the Legs of the three crucified Persons; when they had actually broke the Legs of each Malefactor, that hung on the right Side of our LORD and on the left; their Minds were over-ruled (by a divine Influence, no doubt) to spare the blessed JESUS, and to leave all his Bones *unhurt, untouched*.

The Lamb was to be killed *before the whole Assembly*; in the Presence, either of the whole Congregation of *Israel*, or else of that particular Society, which concurred in eating the Flesh. And did not the whole Multitude of the *Jews* conspire against our REDEEMER, to put Him to Death? Did they not all cry out, as with one Voice? *Crucify Him! Crucify Him!* Was He not executed; at one of their grand Festivals, and in the Sight of the *whole assembled Nation*?—The Blood was not to be poured heedlessly upon the Ground, but received carefully into a Bason; and *sprinkled*, with the utmost Punctuality, *upon the Door-Posts*. In like Manner, the Blood of the heavenly Lamb, is not to be trampled under Foot, by a contemptuous Disregard. It is the Treasure of the Church, and the Medicine of Life. To be *received* therefore by an humble Faith, and devoutly *applied* to our Consciences.—The Sprinkling of that Blood *secured* every *Israelitish* Family, from the *destroying Angel's* Sword. So, the Merits of the slaughtered SAVIOUR * screen every

* Both St. Peter and St. Paul speak of *The Blood of Sprinkling*. 1 Pet. i. 2. Heb. xii. 24. Intimating, by this remarkable

every believing Sinner, from the Stroke of offended Justice, and from the Pains of eternal Death. What must have become of the *Israelite*, who, trusting to the *Uprightness* of his Heart, should neglect to make use of this *divinely appointed* Safeguard? He must inevitably have been punished with the *Death* of his *First-born*. Equally certain, but infinitely more dreadful, will be *his* *Condemnation*; who, before the omniscient Judge, shall presume to plead his own Integrity, or present his own Repentance, and reject the Atonement of the dying *JESUS*.

Ther. Now, if You please, for the *Sin-Offering* *. Which seems to have been the most eminent Sacrifice of them all.

Asp. It was the most *comprehensive*; because, it shadowed forth not only the Death of *CHRIST*, but his Resurrection from the Dead, and his Ascension into Heaven.—As the various Actions of some

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illustrious

remarkable Form of Speech, that the Death of *CHRIST* will be of *no Advantage* to the Sinner, unless it be *applied* to his *Heart*. As the Blood of the Paschal Lamb was no Protection to an *Israelite*, till it had tinged the Posts of his Door.—*Isaiah*, using the same Phrase, and alluding to the same Custom, says of our LORD *JESUS CHRIST*, *He shall sprinkle many Nations*. lii. 15. Not only initiate them into his Church by Baptism; but also, by the Application of his Blood, shall *cleanse* them from their *Guilt*, and *deliver* them from the *Wrath* to come.—If We admit the generally received Doctrine, this Metaphor is *clear* and *easy*: if We reject the Doctrine of real Atonement, the Language is *obscure*, the Sense *embarrassed*, hardly if at all intelligible.

* For the Circumstances relating to the *Sin-Offering*, the Reader will consult *Levit.* xvi.—For those which concern the *Paschal Lamb*, He will have recourse to *Exod.* xii.

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illustrious Personage, which cannot be exhibited by the Painter in a single Draught, are displayed in *several Compartments*; yet all constitute one and the same grand *historical Picture*. So, these glorious Events, which could not possibly be typified by any *single Animal*, were represented by *two Kids of the Goats*: which nevertheless were reputed, but as *one* * Offering.

These Goats were brought to the Door of the Tabernacle, and there presented before the LORD.

CHRIST

* How runs the divine Command? He (the High-Priest) shall take of the Congregation two Kids of the Goats for a Sin-Offering. Levit. xvi. 5. Are not these two Kids styled, in the *singular Number* and *collective Sense*, an Offering?—That We might not mistake, GOD is pleased to add; And one Ram for a Burnt-Offering. Here He names *one*, to prevent a Misapprehension of his Meaning, when He had before said *two*.—That We might be still more secure from all Misconception, and regard this Goat as joined in the *same* Offering with the other; the LORD, contrary to his own Rule in all other Cases, orders the High-Priest to lay his Hands upon the Head of the *Scape-Goat*, not upon the Head of the Goat devoted to Death. He divides the necessary Circumstances of a Sacrifice between them *both*. To intimate, in the clearest Manner, that neither the One nor the Other *separate*, but both *taken together*, were the one sacrificial Oblation, appointed for this distinguished Solemnity.

If this be true, I think, the Passage is a pretty considerable Proof, That *Atonement* was made by suffering *vicarious Punishment*; notwithstanding what has been urged against it, from the tenth Verse of the Chapter.—If We require human Authority for the Support of this Interpretation, one of the greatest human Authorities may be seen in the celebrated *Wissius*: *Uterque Hircus portinebitur ad unum Sacrificium pro Peccato, Hostiæ unus loco. Uterque erat Pecus piacularis, vicaria Israeli Peccatori, ejusque Peccatum ferens. De Oecon. Lib. IV. Cap. vi.*

DIALOGUE III. 87

CHRIST also presented Himself before *GOD*, when *He* went up to Jerusalem, that all Things written by the Prophets concerning Him might be accomplished *.—The Goat, on which the *LORD*'s Lot fell, was devoted to Death. *CHRIST* also being delivered by the determinate Counsel and Fore-knowledge of *GOD*†, was crucified and slain.—The Body was burnt without the Camp. Which pointed at the very Place, and pictured out the very Nature, of our *LORD*'s Sufferings. For *He* suffered without the Gate‡: was there exposed to the Rage of Men, and the Wrath of *GOD*; under the most exquisite Pains of Body, and the most insupportable Agonies of Soul. All significantly typified, by the Flame of a devouring Fire. Than which nothing is more fierce, more penetrating, or more severely tormenting.

As the Animal that was slaughtered, shewed forth the *REDEEMER* dying for our Sins; that which escaped, prefigured the same *SAVIOUR*, rising again for our Justification.—The High-Priest put his Hands upon the Head of the Scape-Goat, and with great Solemnity, confessed the Sins of the whole Congregation. The Import of this Ceremony is expressly declared in the sacred Canon; *The Goat shall bear upon Him their Iniquity*. It is charmingly explained by the Prophet, *The LORD laid on HIM the Iniquity of Us all*; and most delightfully confirmed by the Apostle, *He Himself bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree*.

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* Luke xviii. 31. † Acts ii. 23. ‡ Heb. xiii. 12.

|| It is observable, that whereas the Scape-Goat is said to bear *NOT* the Sins of Israel, *Levit. xvi. 22.* the very same Phrase is applied to *CHRIST*, *Isai. liii. 12.*

This done, the Goat was dismissed into a *Land not inhabited*: a Place separated from all Resort of Men: where he was never likely to be found any more. To teach Us, That our Offences, having been expiated by the bleeding *JESUS*, are intirely done away; shall never rise up in Judgment against Us; but, according to the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, *When the Iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, there shall be none; and the Sins of Judah, they shall not be found**.—It is farther enjoined, That *Aaron* shall confess all the Iniquities of the Children of Israel, and all their Transgressions, in all their Sins. Iniquities, Transgressions, Sins, are particularized; and, to this Group of Expressions, the Word *all* is added. To inform Us, that the *least* Sins need the Atonement of *CHRIST*'s Death; to assure Us, that the *greatest* Sins are not beyond the Compass of its Efficacy; and that *all* Sins, be they ever so heinous, or ever so numerous, are forgiven to the true Believer.

The High-Priest carried the Blood of the Victim into the second Tabernacle, even *within the Veil*. So *CHRIST* entered with his own Blood, not into the Holy Places made with Hands, but into *Heaven itself*†.—The Blood was sprinkled *before* the Mercy-Seat; sprinkled *upon* the Mercy-Seat; and *left* in the Holy of Holies, that it might always remain before the LORD. And does not *CHRIST* always appear in the Presence of GOD for Us? Does He not *ever live* to make Intercession for Us? To plead his all-sufficient Propitiation in our behalf; that the Benefits procured thereby, may be *communicated, ratified, and perpetuated* to his People?

Ther.

* Jer. l. 20.

† Heb. ix. 24.

Ther. These Benefits, *Aspasio*, are ascribed in Scripture, to Repentance and Reformation of Life, Qualifications of *our own*; not to any such Cause as a vicarious Sacrifice; where the Merit must necessarily subsist in *another*. What says the Apostle *Peter*, when He had just received his Instructions from the HOLY GHOST? *Repent and be converted*, not look unto an Atonement, or depend upon a Propitiation, *that your Sins may be blotted out* *.

Asp. 'Tis true, the Benefits of the new Covenant are promised to Penitents, as their *happy Portion*; but never assigned to their Repentance, as the *procuring Cause*. Never to their Repentance, but to the Blood of the great High-Priest, called therefore *The Blood of the everlasting Covenant* †: being the Condition stipulated in it, required by it, and in Consequence of which, all its unspeakable Privileges are bestowed.

Besides; the Qualifications You suppose, are the Gift of Heaven. We are not able to *exercise*, till *CHRIST*, who is exalted for this very Purpose, *gives* Repentance ‡.—A Conversion to GOD, and a Newness of Life, are not the Effect of *human* Abilities, but the Work of the *divine* SPIRIT, and the Fruit of the REDEEMER's Death.—Indeed, this Death is the Purchase of *every* heavenly Blessing. This opens the Hand, opens the Heart of GOD, and all the Stores of his inexhaustible Bounty.

Ther. You begin to be in Raptures, *Aspasio*!

Asp.

* Acts iii. 19. † Heb. xiii. 20. ‡ Acts v. 31.

Asp. Excuse me, *Theron*. It is not easy to repress the Sallies of Delight and Devotion, when we muse upon *such amazing* Loving-kindness, and are touched with a Sense of such *immensely rich* Benefits.— A great High-Priest! Who is *higher than the Heavens*; yet *humbled* Himself to Death, even the Death of the Cross! Who is *consecrated for evermore*; and pleads *all* his Merit, improves *all* his Influence, for *our* consummate Felicity!

*What Heart of Stone but glows at Thoughts like these?
Such Contemplations mount Us, and should mount
The Mind still higher; nor ever glance on Man
Unraptur'd, uninflam'd*.*

But I check myself; and will either reply to your Objections, or listen to your Sentiments. Listen as attentively, as You Yourself attend to the Music of that *shrill-tongued Thrush*.

Ther. Its sweetly-modulated Lays, eminent even in the Symphony of Spring, have indeed attracted my Ears. But my Mind is *disengaged*, and free for your Conversation.

Asp. I can repeat a Song, sweeter far than this, or all the Melody of the Wood-land Choirs. A Song, that has Harmony enough, to make the *Brow of Melancholy* wear a Smile, or to sooth away the Sorrows of Death itself. *Who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of GOD's Elect? It is GOD that justifieth; who is He that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died; yea rather, that is risen again; who is even*
at

*at the right Hand of GOD; who also maketh Intercession for Us**.—According to my Friend's Principles, the Strain of this triumphant Exclamation was ill-judged, and should have run in the following Manner: "Who shall lay any thing to our Charge? "We have endeavoured to preserve a Rectitude of Disposition, and to persist in a laudable Course of Action. Where-ever We failed, We have been sorry for the Fault, and have implored Pardon from the divine MAJESTY. What then shall dismay Us? Or who shall condemn Us."—Your Topics of Consolation would be complete, without having Recourse to the Death of CHRIST, as an Atonement for Sin; or to the Resurrection of CHRIST, as an Evidence that the Atonement is accepted; or to the Intercession of CHRIST, as the Cause of our Interest in that transcendent Blessing.

Ther. Since You so frequently mention, and so earnestly insist upon Atonement, I should be glad to know the precise Signification of the Word. I am told, the original Phrase has nothing to do with the Idea of making Satisfaction.

Ass. We may learn the precise Signification of Atonement, by considering The Means; the Effect; and the Manner, whereby the Means accomplish the Effect.—The Effect of Atonement, is Pardon—The Means of obtaining it, are the Death of CHRIST—The Way or Manner, whereby the Death of CHRIST becomes efficacious for this blessed Purpose, is the sovereign Appointment of his Father; the infinite Dignity of his Person; and especially the vicarious

* Rom. viii. 33, 34.

vicarious Nature of his Sufferings, or their being undergone in the Stead of Sinners.

The original Word, which We translate *Atonement*, implies, in its primary Acceptation, the Notion of *Covering*. Thus the Ark was covered *, *was overlaid with Pitch, within and without*: that all its Chinks might be *secured*, against the insinuating Attempts of the Water; and all its Timber *defended*, from the Injuries of the liquid Element.—When an Object, in this or any other Manner, is covered over for Safety; the Covering *receives* every Shock, and *sustains* all Damages, that would otherwise fall upon the Thing covered. The Image, therefore, is very pertinently used, to express the true *evangelical* Nature of Atonement; and it is applied, with apparent Propriety, to HIM *who is indeed the anointed Cherub, that covereth* †: covereth from the Wrath of GOD, and the Stroke of Justice, by bearing both in our Stead.

* כפרת Thou shalt *besmear, cover, or overlay*. Gen. vi. 14. This is the first Place, in which our Word occurs. And it is supposed to give Us the genuine and native Sense of the Phrase.—Perhaps, the *English* Expression *cover*, may be derived from the Participle כפֹּה *cophē*.

† Ezek. xxviii. 14. This is spoken of the King of Tyre, who was probably a Type of *Anti-Christ*. The Passage describes, What He presumed to *think Himself*; and what He attempted to *pass for*, in the Estimation of the World. If so, I believe, *Aspasio* may very justly apply it to the LORD JESUS. It is a Jewel of the mediatorial Crown: and since it has been sacrilegiously stolen, surely it should be restored to its proper Owner, and replaced upon the REDEEMER's Diadem.

Now

Now We have inquired into the exact Signification of the Hebrew Word, give me Leave to add, That its Meaning is very *extensive*, and not unworthy of our particular Regard. It denotes—The Exercise of divine *Mercy* *—The *Pardon* of Sin †—A *Cleansing* from Guilt ‡—*Purging* from Transgression §—*Reconciliation* for Iniquity ¶—The *Pacifying* of Wrath ¶.—Do not these Passages, (which are expressed by some Branch of the *Verb*, that conveys to Us the Idea of *atoning*) plainly intimate—That the Atonement of *CHRIST* is the meritorious Cause of all these desirable Effects; is the Foundation of every Act of divine Goodness; and the Origin of every Blessing vouchsafed to Sinners?

Ther. After all, *this* is the Consideration, that principally offends and perplexes me—*GOD* is a *wife*, a *sublime*, an *infinitely pure* Spirit. How then can He take Pleasure, in the Effusion of Blood, or the Burning of Flesh? How can any such *low carnal* Inducements, make Him *merciful* to Sinners; or appease, what You call, his Wrath?

Asp. Rather, what the *Scriptures* call his Wrath. —You mistake our Doctrine, my dear *Theron*. We never maintain, that any Sacrifice whatever, not even the Propitiation of *CHRIST*'s Death, was intended to *make* *GOD* merciful. Only to *make* *Way* for his eternal Purposes of Mercy, without *any* Pre-

* Deut. xxxii. 43. † Deut. xxi. 8. 2 Chron. xxx. 18. ‡ Numb. xxxv. 33. ¶ Psal. lxx. 3. § Dan. ix. 24. ¶ Ezek. xvi. 63.

judice either to the Demands of his Law, or the Rights of his Justice.—Our Sentiments on this Head, are exactly consonant to his own *Declaration*, and his own *Procedure*, in the Case of *Job's Friends* *. Though displeased with their Conduct, He was merciful to their Persons. Nevertheless, He would not exercise that Mercy, till they had first offered a Sacrifice, and acted Faith in a dying SAVIOUR.

Neither is it ever supposed, That the infinitely wise and pure GOD can take *Pleasure* in the Effusion of Blood, or the Burning of Flesh, *simply* considered. Only as they had a Reference to that noble and *inestimable* Sacrifice, which brings the highest Honour to his Name; which those slaughtered Animals exhibited in a Figure; and to which every true *Israelite* had a believing Regard.

I say, had a *believing Regard*. For, it is affirmed by the Author to the *Hebrews*, That the Gospel was preached to the *Israelites* in the Wilderness †. —*What* does He mean by *the Gospel*? The very Essence of this benevolent Scheme, according to the Apostle's own Definition, is, That *CHRIST* died for our Sins ‡.—*How* was this Gospel preached to our Fathers in the Wilderness? By significant Emblems; especially, by slaughtered Animals, and bleeding Victims. By which *CHRIST* was almost continually, though not so evidently as in these latter Times, set forth crucified among them §.

In this Sense alone, those carnal Usages were worthy the Wisdom of GOD to appoint, and the Majesty

* See Job xlii. 7, 8. † Heb. iii. 2. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 3.
 § Gal. iii. 1.

jeſty of GOD to accept.—This gave them a peculiar *Dignity* and *Importance*; and ſet them far above all the ſimilar Obſervances, uſed in the Hea-then Worſhip.—They were alſo, when thus explained, thus improved, extremely profitable to Believers; as they directed their Contemplation to the *future* Sufferings of a SAVIOUR, and ratified to their Faith the Benefits of his *ever-operating* Sacrifice. Which, We are aſſured by an infallible Voice, was effectual for the *Redemption of the Tranſgreſſions under the firſt Covenant* *.

Ther.

* When I reflect on theſe Words, I wonder how any One can aſſert, That *all the Jews died under the Curſe of the Law*.—Died under the Curſe of the Law! Even though the Apoſtle has warranted it for a Truth, That *All theſe* (meaning *Abraham, Sarah, Iſaac, Jacob, &c.*) *died in Faith*. Heb. xi. 13.—Even though He has elſewhere laid it down as a Maxim, *So then they which are of Faith*, in whatever Period of Time they live, or under whatever Diſpenſation of Religion they worſhip, *are bleſſed with faithful Abraham*. Gal. iii. 3.—Even though the Pſalmiſt, in one Place, affirms, *Bleſſed are they whoſe Unrighteouſneſſes are forgiven, and whoſe Sin is covered*. And, in another Place, declares concerning Himſelf and his pious Cotemporaries; *Look how wide the Eaſt is from the Weſt! So far hath He ſet our Sins from Us*, Pſal. xxxiii. 1. Pſal. ciii. 12.

From theſe and many other Texts, I think, it is evident, That the faithful *Jews* no more died under the Curſe of the Law, than the faithful *Chriſtians*. The Death of *CHRIST* procured the Pardon and Acceptance of Believers, even before He came in the Fleſh. From the Beginning, He had covenanted with the FATHER, as their MEDIATOR: and GOD, to whom all Things are preſent, ſaw the certain Accompliſhment of his Undertaking. He was therefore

Ther. So You apprehend, that, in those Usages, practised by the antient Jews, the Gospel was emblematically preached, and **CHRIST** in a Figure exhibited.

Ass. Most certainly, *Theron*. And for this Cause, under the Law, almost all Things were purged with Blood*. The Multiplicity, the Variety, the Constancy of their Sacrifices, were all designed to impress upon their Minds, and famaliarize to their Thoughts, this great evangelical Truth.—Was any One overtaken by a Fault? He must present a Victim, and the Priest must slay it, by way of *Trespas-Offering*. To signify, that the Guilt which was contracted, could be done away only by the atoning Death of **CHRIST**.—Had any One received a signal Blessing? A Beast was slain by way of *Peace-Offering*; as a public Expression of Gratitude for the Mercy, and also as an emphatical Declaration, that all Good vouchsafed to fallen Man, is owing to the **REDEEMER**'s Ransom.

And not only by their solemn *sacrificial* Acts, but even by their *ordinary* Meals, this grand Lesson was inculcated. They were forbidden to eat the Blood, in order to awaken and preserve in their Consciences, a reverential and fiducial Regard to the precious Blood of **CHRIST**. The **HOLY GHOST**, assigning a Reason for this sacred Prohibition, says expressly, *Because the Blood maketh an Atonement for Your †Souls*: the Blood of Beasts typically,

therefore, by virtue of the divine Decree, and in Point of saving Efficacy, *A Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*. Though He laid down his Life in the Reign of *Tiberius*, He was a real **REDEEMER** in all Ages.

* Heb. ix. 22.

† Levit. xvii. 11.

typically, the Blood of *CHRIST* effectually.—O! that *Christians* would, in this Particular, learn of *Jews*. Learn, at least, from *Jewish* Ordinances, to have their Attention incessantly fixed on that divine High-Priest, who, *by one Offering, hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified**.

Ther. Another odd Circumstance has often given me Disgust, and been apt to prejudice me against the Institutions of the Old Testament. Many of them are mean, contemptible, and perfectly *puerile*. “Can these, I have said within myself, be ordained by a GOD of infinite Wisdom, and transcendent Glory? Can We reasonably imagine, that a Mandate should be issued from the Court of Heaven, on purpose to forbid the *Boiling*, and injoin the *Roasting*†, of a particular Piece of Meat?—Will the great Ruler of the Skies, concern Himself about the precise Manner of *killing* one Bird, and *releasing* another‡?—Will He, who claims the Worship of the Heart, have such an especial Regard to a Drop or two of despicable Blood, put upon the *Tip* of the *Right-ear*, or the *Thumb* of the *Right-hand*||?—Surely, such childish Ceremonies are too minute and trivial for the *Nation*, much more for the *solemn Appointment*, of the *SUPREME* Majesty!”

Ans. You will please to remember, that, when those Ceremonies were ordained, it was the *Infancy*§, at least the *Minority* of the Church. And We have

VOL. I. H Reason

* Heb. x. 14. † Exod. xii. 9. ‡ Levit. xiv. 4, 5, 6, 7. || Exod. xxix. 20.

§ St. Paul calls the Church of those Times, *new-born*, An *Infant* or *Babe*. Gal. iv. 1, 3.

Reason to admire the *Condescension* of the great CREATOR, in adapting his Revelation to the State of his People; *speaking unto them, even as unto Babes* *.—The Institutions, at which You hint, were undoubtedly mean and trifling, if considered *in themselves*. But, contemplate them in their Relation to the ever blessed MEDIATOR, some of whose *Offices, Merits, or Sufferings*, they shadowed forth; then they acquire a real Magnificence, and impart the noblest Instruction.

The Blood put upon the Tip of the Ear, and Thumb of the Hand, denotes our *personal* Application of the Death of CHRIST. Without which all its Virtue, though boundless and inconceivable, will profit Us nothing. Those particular Parts of the Body, may signify the *perceptive* and *executive* Faculties: in both which We offend, and for both which We need the great Propitiation.—Of the two Birds You mention, one was to be *killed*, the other was to *fly away*, after it had been *dipped* in the Blood of its Fellow. Thus the LORD JESUS was crucified for our Sins: and We, being *washed* in his Blood; being *interested* in the Atonement of our holy Victim, and elder Brother; are *acquitted* from Guilt, and *escape* Condemnation.—Concerning the Paschal Lamb it was particularly enjoined, That the *Flesh should not be eaten raw, nor sodden with Water, but roasted with Fire*; and of every Burnt-Offering, the Fat and the Inwards were delivered up to the devouring Flame. All this was an Emblem of that tremendous Indignation, which is *poured out like Fire*; which *seized* our immaculate Sacrifice, that it might

spare

spare polluted Sinners; and which must have consumed utterly any MEDIATOR, who was less than infinite, or other than divine.

Had You beheld our renowned *Newton* blowing up, with great Assiduity and Attention, his little watery *Vesicles* into the Air; You would, perhaps, have despised the venerable Philosopher, and have thought him little better than a *hoary Idiot*. But when You was told, that, in every one of these volatile sopy Bubbles, He discovered the beauteous *Colours* of the *Rain-bow*; and from this seemingly childish Experiment, He explained the *Nature* of that wonderful Arch; You would then entertain a different Notion, both of the Man and of his Employ.—So, when You discern the blessed *JESUS* looking through these *Windows*, and flourishing through these *Lattices* * of the *Jewish* Oeconomy; You will, I hope, conceive a higher Opinion of them; and derive richer Advantage from them.

Ther. There are several *Persons*, as well as ritual Observances, of a very singular Character, mentioned in the *Mosaic* Law. The *Leper*, for Instance, the *Nazarite*, with others of the same antiquated and grotesque Stamp. Which seem, to me at least, so many unmeaning Narratives; that convey no manner of Edification to Readers in the present Age.—I have frequently had an Inclination, and now I have a proper Opportunity, to ask your Opinion upon these Points.

Asp. I thank You, *Theron*, for giving me the Hint. What You propose, is by no means foreign to the

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Topic

* *Cantic.* ii. 9. The ceremonial Institutions of the *Jewish* Law are, with as much Truth as Ingenuity, called —*Evangelium elementare & praeliminare.*

100 DIALOGUE III.

Topic of our Discourse.—Those Persons were truly remarkable; neither are the Circumstances of their Case recorded in vain. They picture out, in *dismal* and *delightful* Colours, the Sinner and the SAVIOUR.—To know Ourselves, and to know *CHRIST*, is true *Wisdom*; is indeed the Consummation of all Knowledge. Here, We have a Lecture of hieroglyphical Instruction, on both those important Subjects.

The *Lepor* * was an Emblem of a Sinner.—His Disease extremely *afflictive* to Himself, and intolerably *loathsome* to others. Sin likewise is the *forest* of all Miseries, to the Wretch who commits it; and most *detestably* odious, to the GOD who forbids it.—The Leper was secluded from the *Benefits* of Society, and all Communication with his Fellow-citizens. The Sinner also, while impenitent and unpardoned, is an *Alien* from the Commonwealth of *Israel*; without any Enjoyment of the Comforts, or any Interest in the Privileges of the Gospel. If He dies in this Condition, He must be for ever *shut out* from the Kingdom of Heaven; for ever *cut off* from the Presence of the LORD.

The Contagion was sometimes *so pestilent*, that it not only tainted the Clothes of the Diseased, but spread itself over the Walls of his House, and infected the Timber of the Beams. It was sometimes *so raging* and *inveterate*, that it could not be stopt, could not be eradicated, but by burning the Garment, and demolishing the Building. Does not this give Us a clear, but melancholy View, of *original* Corruption? Which has transfused its Poison, through *all* the Faculties

* Levit. xiii, xiv.

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culties of the Soul, and *all* the Members of the Body. Nor will ever be *intirely* expelled, till Death releases the former, and consigns the latter to the Dust.

—What could cure this terrible Distemper, even in its *mildest* State? Not all the Balm of *Gilead*; not all the Drugs on a thousand Hills; nothing but the *consecrated* Oil and *sacrificial* Blood, duly apply'd by the High-Priest. And what can heal the Disorders of our fallen Souls? So far heal them, as to purge away their Guilt, and subdue the Prevalence of their Iniquities? No Acts of Mortification, no Vigilance, nor any Efforts of our own; nothing but the *atoning* Death, and *sanctifying* Spirit of the blessed *JESUS*. The Malignity and Virulence of this Plague of the Heart, are *absolutely incorrigible* by any other Expedient. But, blessed be divine Grace, this Remedy, provided by our great High-Priest, and administered by our great Physician, is *sovereign* and *never fails*.

The Case of the *Nazarites* * was the very reverse of the State of the *Lepers*. *Her Nazarites*, Jeremiah says, *were purer than Snow, they were whiter than Milk; they were more ruddy in Body than Rubies, their Polishing was of Sapphires* †. A faint Representation of the only begotten SON, who is *the fairest among ten thousand*; the Brightness of His Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person; both GOD and Man in one sacred, wonderful, adorable SAVIOUR.—*They*, during the Time of their Separation, abstained from Wine; withdrew from secular Business; avoided every Kind of Pollution; and dedicated themselves, in an especial Manner, to the Ser-

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vice

* Numb. vi.

† Lam. iv. 7.

vice of GOD. A Type of that *glorious Nazarite*, who was separated, for a Season, from the Fruitions of Heaven: who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, both in his Nature and all his Conversation: who sanctified Himself, and devoted his Life and Labours, his Soul and Body, to the Glory of his Father, and the Redemption of his People. — The *Nazarites*, when they had discharged their Vow, and were ceremonially *clean*, yet were obliged to offer a *Sin-Offering*, a *Burnt-Offering*, and a *Peace-Offering*. So, the great REDEEMER, though He had *perfectly* obeyed all the preceptive Parts of the divine Law, yet was required to offer up a Sacrifice—even the *incomparably precious* Sacrifice of Himself—in order to consummate the Work of our Salvation.

Ther. Have You a sufficient Warrant, *Aspasio*, for this Strain of Interpretation? Is it *sound*, is it *rational*, or conformable to any *authentic* Standard of scriptural Exposition? Methinks, it looks more like the Child of Fancy, than the Offspring of Judgment; more like the Sally of a sportive Imagination, than the Result of a sober Disquisition.

You cannot be ignorant, how the ruling Passion tinctures the whole Conduct. Hence it is, I apprehend, that your *religious Inamoratoes* find heavenly Beauties, where Scripture intended no more than natural Truths. Hence it is, that they turn plain Facts into profound Figures, and allegorize *common Sense* into *pious Absurdity*.—Have You never seen the *mystic* Interpretations of some antient, and I may add, some modern

modern Divines? The Honesty of their Design is transparent, and the Piety of their Lives is unquestionable; otherwise, We should be tempted to suspect, that they meant to burlesque the Scriptures, and disgrace their Author.

Who can ever persuade Himself, that the supremely wise GOD, would send Us to search for a *Body of Divinity*, in a *Bundle of Rods*? Or set Us to spin all the Mysteries of Christianity, from a few Fleeces of Wool, *ring-straked, speckled, and grizzled*? Thus to expound the Scriptures, is, not to open them clearly, and apply them judiciously, but rather to whip them into Froth*.

Asp. We have the Authority of our LORD Himself. Who has informed Us—That the *brazen Serpent* lifted up in the Wilderness †, was figurative of his own Suspension and Death on the Cross.—That the *Temple*, built on Mount *Sion*, was typical of his immaculate Body, in which dwelt all the Fulness of the GODHEAD ‡.—That the Prophet *Jonah*, lodged in the Belly of the Whale, and discharged from that strange Confinement, on the third Day ||; was an Emblem of his own descending into the Grave, and rising again before his Flesh saw Corruption.

We have also the Testimony and the Practice of the chiefest of the Apostles, for our Warrant. He assures Us, That the *Rock* smitten by *Moses*, had a Reference to *CHRIST* §; who was wounded for

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* *Luther* used to call such far-fetched and unnatural Allegories, *Spumam Scripturæ*.

† John iii. 14.

‡ John ii, 19, 21. Col. ii. 9.

|| Matt. xii. 39, 40.

§ 1 Cor. x. 4.

our Sins, and is the Foundation of our Hopes. That the *Waters*, issuing at the Stroke, were significative of those spiritual Blessings, which flow from a crucified SAVIOUR. That, as the former followed the Sons of *Jacob*, through all the Circumvolutions of their tedious Journey; the latter accompany the Disciples of *JESUS*, in every Stage of their earthly Pilgrimage.—Let the great Teacher of the *Gentiles* be our Expofitor, and We shall see the *Veil* of the *Temple* dignified with a Significancy, richer far than its costly Materials, and curious Workmanship. Its Silk and Embroidery exhibit, to the Eye of Faith, the pure and spotless Flesh of *CHRIST**. As, by rending the material Veil, the Holy of Holies became *visible* and *accessible*; so, by wounding the Body, and spilling the Blood of *CHRIST*, the *GOD* of Heaven was *manifested*, and the Way to Heaven *opened*.

Every Reader must admire those *divided Waves*; which, instead of overwhelming the *Israelites* with a resistless Deluge, stood like a Wall of Defence on their Right-hand, and on their left, as they marched through the Depths of the Sea.—Every Reader must admire that *wonderful Cloud*, which hung like a wide extended Canopy over the Hosts of *Israel*; and screened them from the annoying Sun-beams, as they passed through the sultry Desert.—Our Admiration must be heightened, when We find *that*, which was a Cloud by Day, becoming a *Pillar of Fire* by Night; and illuminating their Camp with the most amazing, as well as the most cheering Splendor.—But St. *Paul* discerned a *greater Glory*, and a *deeper Design*, in these

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* Heb. x. 20.

unparalleled Events. The People, He says, *were baptized unto Moses, in the Cloud and in the Sea**. These symbolically represented, The Baptism of Water and of Fire; or the Application of CHRIST'S Blood to our Souls, and the Efficacy of his SPIRIT on our Hearts. In the former of which, consists our Justification; from the latter of which, proceeds our Sanctification.

I fear, You will think my Discourse, somewhat like the Journey just now mentioned; but I must not wholly omit the Epistle to the *Hebrews*. Which, of all others, is the most *unexceptionable Vindication*, as well as the *faultless Model*, of allegorical Exposition.—It is delightful to observe, what Propriety of Address, the inspired Writer uses. He speaks to the *Jews*, in *their own Way*; alludes to their own Usages, Ordinances, and Ceremonies: proves them to be Types of, and Guides to, a more clear, a more benign, and in all respects a more excellent † Oeconomy.

More

* 1 Cor. x. 2.

† He styles the legal Oblations, and indeed the whole Service of the *Jewish Sanctuary*, *The Example and Shadow of heavenly Things*; or of CHRIST JESUS, and evangelical Worship, and spiritual Blessings, *Heb. viii. 5*.—*Τροχίτυμα, the Pattern*: somewhat like the Strokes, penciled out upon a Piece of fine Linen; which present You with the Figure of Sprigs, of Leaves, and of Flowers; but have not yet received their splendid Colours, their curious Shades, and beautiful Inrichments, from the Labours of the Needle.—*Εἰκὼν, A shadowy Representation*: which gives You some dim and imperfect Idea of the Body; but not the fine Features, not the distinguishing Air, none of those living Graces, which adorn the real Person.—Yet, both the Pattern and the Shadow lead

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More particularly He displays the *transcendent Superiority* of *CHRIST* and his Gifts, even to those Persons and Privileges, which they held in the *highest Esteem*. These, like the Morning Star, were introductory to, yet totally eclipsed by the rising Sun.

They had exalted Apprehensions of the *Angelic Excellencies*. The Apostle therefore celebrates the REDEEMER, as the LORD whom Angels obey, as the GOD whom Angels adore. — They always reckoned *Moses* to be the *first Favourite* of Heaven, and chief among the Children of Men. He lets them know, that *Moses*, with all his extraordinary Endowments, was but a *Servant* in the House of *JESUS*. It was his greatest Honour, to be the Harbinger of this Prince of Peace. — As the Priesthood and Sacrifices were some of their distinguishing Privileges; He shews the Pre-eminence of *CHRIST*'s Office to all the *Aaronic Orders*. He demonstrates the extensive and everlasting Efficacy of *his one Atonement*, in preference to the *whole Series* of the *Levitical Oblations*.

Ther. Thus interpreted, I must acknowledge, the Book of *Levitical Ceremonies* is *significant* and *edifying*, Whereas, abstracted from this evangelical Improvement, nothing can be more *empty* and *jejune*. I once thought, that, to peruse those obsolete Canons, was like sitting down to an Entertainment of *dry Bones*. But, if such be their Import, they may yield *Marrow* and *Fatness* to the attentive Mind.

Due

our Minds to something *nobler* than themselves. The Pattern, to that which *completes* it; the Shadow, to that which *occasions* it.

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Due Care, however, should be taken, not to suppose a Type, where there is no *apparent* Foundation of Analogy in the Thing itself; or no *Hint* of this Nature given Us by the unerring SPIRIT. Lest, instead of being *guided* by Truth, We are *bewildered* by Fancy.—And, when either or both these Handles present themselves, I think, We should beware of straining the Subject, beyond the Bounds of a *just* and *reasonable* Comparison. Lest, instead of *following* the Clue, We stretch it till it *breaks*.—If the first Caution is not observed, the Sense of Scripture will lie so deep, or be removed to such a Distance; that none but Persons of the most *acute* Discernment can find it, or none but Persons of the most *excursive* Imagination can reach it. If the second is not regarded, the Meaning of those divine Volumes will become so *vague* and *volatile*, that there will hardly remain any Possibility of ascertaining or fixing it.

Asp. As to the Expedience and Necessity of these cautionary Limitations, I have the Pleasure of agreeing intirely with my Friend.—Let our Fancy submit to the Reins of Judgment, otherwise her Excursions will be *wild* and *lawless*. Let our Zeal borrow the Eyes of Discretion, otherwise her Efforts will be *blind* and *extravagant*. And let all, thus tempered, thus regulated, be under the Influence of enlightening Grace. Then, to spiritualize the antient Scriptures, will be to convert the Stones of the Sanctuary into the Jewels of a Crown; and to fetch, not *Water* only, but *Milk* and *Honey*, from the flinty Rock.

Then, how *pleasing* must it be, as well as *instructive*, to discover the blessed JESUS, in all the Institutions of the *Mosaic* Law!—To see his *Incarna-*

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tion prefigured by the Feast of *Tabernacles* *. When the *Israelites* were to relinquish their Houses, and lodge in Booths. Even as the Son of GOD left the Bosom of his Father, and the Seats of Bliss, to inhabit a Cottage of Clay, and sojourn in a Vale of Tears.—To see our spotless and divine Victim, typically slain at the joyful Solemnity of the *Passover*, and the anniversary Fast of *Expiation*.—To see his *Death*, that inestimable Ransom for our Souls, presented to our Faith, in every *Morning* and *Evening Sacrifice* †: his *Intercession*, that prevailing Recommendation of our Prayers, most sweetly expressed by the rich *Incense*, which attended the sacred Rite.—To see the various Methods of *Purification*; some pointing at the *Fountain* ‡, opened for Sin and for Uncleanness in our REDEEMER's bleeding Heart; others referring to those sanctifying Operations of the SPIRIT, which act as a *Refiner's Fire* §, or as *Fuller's Sope*.—To see, in the *City of Refuge* §, that *perfect Security*, which CHRIST's meritorious Sufferings in our Stead, afford to every penitent and believing Sinner.

If it was so very affecting and so very encouraging to *Æneas*, when He beheld the Story of the *Trojan* Heroes, pictured upon the Walls of the *Carthaginian* Temple ¶; what Satisfaction and Joy must arise in the Christian's Breast, when He perceives the *amiable Lineaments* of his everlasting Friend, *pourtrayed* in all the Peculiarities of the *Jewish* Worship, and in the most distinguishing Events of the *Jewish* History!—

This

* Levit. xxiii. 34, 40, 42.

† Exod. xxix. 38, 39.

‡ Exod. xxix. 4. Psal. li. 7.

§ Numb. xxxi. 23.

¶ Isai. iv. 4.

§ Numb. xxxv. 11, 12.

¶ Virg. *Æn.* I.

DIALOGUE III. 109

This must inexpressibly endear the Bible to his Affections. This spreads *Life* and *Glory* through every Page of that blessed Book.

Ther. How soon is this Walk finished ! How imperceptibly has the Time stole away !—These *Garden-Gates* I always used to approach with a particular Complacency. They seemed to afford me a *welcome Retreat* from the Impertinence and Vanity of the World. Now, methinks, I enter them with Reluctance. Because, they are likely to put a Period to this agreeable Conversation.—However, as my *Aspasio* enters with me, I am reconciled, I am satisfied. It will be in his Power to restore the Pleasure, that must now be interrupted. And this is what I shall ere long request ; because I have not spoke my whole Mind upon the present Subject.

Asp. Whenever You think proper, *Theron*. This is, to me, a *favourite Subject* : and not to me only, but to incomparably better Judges.—The Man, who had been caught up into the third Heavens, and seen the Visions of GOD, determined to know *nothing* but *JESUS CHRIST* and Him *crucified* *.—At the *grandest* Assembly, that ever was convened on Earth, this furnished the *principal*, if not the *only* Topic of Conversation.—And in that World, where the Voice of Joy and Thanksgiving is perpetually heard, this constitutes the *Burden* of the Song ; *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed Us to GOD by thy Blood* †.

* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

† Rev. v. 9.



DIALOGUE IV.

THERON.

TMUST now desire my *Aspasio* to inform me, *What* that grand Assembly was, (which He mentioned in the Close of our last Discourse) and *where* convened?

Asp. Can't you guess, *Theron*? — Was it in the Plains of *Thessaly*; when *Xerxes* drew together the Forces of more than half the known World, and appeared at the Head of all the Potentates of the East? — Was it in the *Roman Forum*; when the Senators were assembled in their Robes, and the Barbarians took them for a Synod of Gods? — No; it was on the Mount of *Transfiguration*. Where the Son of the true GOD, the LORD of eternal Glory, shone forth in some of his *celestial* and *native* Splendor; with Garments white as the Snow*, and a Countenance

* *Mark ix. 3.* The Evangelist's Description is, like the Scene, remarkably bright; and the Gradation of his Images, is almost as worthy of Observation, as the memorable

nance bright as the Sun. Where he conversed with two of his *most distinguished* Saints, just come down from the Regions of Bliss and Immortality: with *Moses* the great Deliverer of the Law, and with *Elijah* the resolute Restorer of its Honours. Where he was attended by three of his *principal* Ambassadors; who were to be the Reformers of Mankind, and the Lights of the World.

This, I think, is the most venerable and august Assembly, that the Annals of History have recorded.—And what was the *Topic of Conversation*, amongst these illustrious Personages?—Not the Affairs of State, nor the Revolutions of Empire; not the curious Refinements of Literature, nor the wonderful Discoveries of Philosophy; but the *ignominious and bloody* Exit*, which the divine *JESUS* was soon to make at *Jerusalem*.—This Circumstance, methinks, should recommend the Subject to our frequent Discourse; even though it was less eminent, for intrinsic Dignity, and comfortable Import.

Talking

nable Fact.—The Garments were *white*—*exceeding white*—white *as the Snow*—whiter than any Fuller on Earth could make them—surpassing all the Works of *Art*, equalling the first and finest Productions of *Nature*.—Nay, so great was the Lustre, that it *glistered* (*εὐφράνθη*) like the Lightening, and even dazzled the Sight.

* Does not this very delicately, yet very strongly intimate, That the Sufferings and Death of *CHRIST*, were the principal End of the *Mosaic* Institutions, and the principal Subject of the *Prophetic* Teachings? For, is it not natural to suppose, that *Moses* and *Elijah* intended, when ministering on Earth, that very Thing, which their Conversation dwelt upon, when they descended from Heaven?

Talking in this manner, they arrive at the *Park*. Which, the Moment You enter, fills the View with its bold, enlarged, and magnificent Sweep.—It was diversified with level and rising Ground. Here, scooped into mimic Amphitheatres; with the *Deer* pendent on the little Summit, or shooting down the easy Precipice. There, raised into gentle Hills; some of which were *canopied* with a large, spreading, solitary Oak; others were *tufted* with a Cluster of tapering and verdant Elms. Two or three *Cascades*, gleaming from afar, as they poured along the grassy Slope, gave a pleasing Variation to the Prospect: While they startled the timorous unexperienced Fawns, with their foaming Current, and watery Roar.—*Grandeur* and *Simplicity* seemed to be the Genius of the Place. Every thing breathed an Air of noble Negligence, and artless Majesty.

In the Center of all, rose a curious *romantic Mount*.—Its Form was *exactly round*; somewhat like a Sugar-loaf, lopt off a little below the Point.—Not co-eval with Nature, but the Work of human Industry. Thrown up, 'tis supposed, in those perilous Times, when *Britain* was alarmed by foreign Invasions, or bled with intestine Wounds.—It was covered, all around, with *Eldar-shrubs*; Whose Ranks, gradually rising, and spreading Shade above Shade, composed a kind of *woody Theatre*: Through which were struck two or three *spiral Walks*; leading, by a gentle Ascent, and under embowering Verdure, to the Summit.—At proper Intervals,
and

and on every Side of the Hill, were formed little *Arborets*; with Apertures, cut through the Boughs, to admit a Prospect of the Country.—In one or other of these leafy Boxes, You command, at every Hour of the Day, either the Sun or the Shade.—All along the winding Avenues, and all around the beauteous Rests, sprung *Daffodils*, *Primroses*, and *Violets*: which, mingling with *Hyacinths* and *Cowslips*, composed many a charming Piece of *natural Mosaic*.

How agreeable, as they climb the circling Path, to reflect on the *happy Change*, that has now taken Place!—Where steely *Helmets* gleamed, or brazen *Shields* clashed, the *Goldfinches* twitter their Loves, and display their painted Plumes. The Dens of Rapine, or the horrid Haunts of Bloodshed, are become the Retreats of calm Contemplation, and friendly Converse.—In yonder lower Spaces, where the armed Troops were wont to patrol; from whence they made Excursions, to ravage the Villages, or terrify the Swains; the *Fallow-Deer* trip lightly, or the *full-headed Stags* stand at Bay.

From a small Eminence, but at a considerable Distance, gushed a couple of Springs. Which, rambling through a Grove, lost one another in the shady Labyrinth. Emerging, at length, from the Gloom, they approached nearer and nearer, and fell into Embraces at the Foot of this Hill. They rolled, in amicable Conjunction, along the pebbly Channel, that encircles its Basis; and added their *sober Melody* to the *sprightly Warbling* of the Birds.—Flowing off in one common Stream, they formed the fine Pieces of Water, which beautified the Park. From thence, they stole into the Meadow, and wi-

dened into a *River*. There, enamoured as it were with each other, they glide by wealthy Towns, and sweep through flowery Vales; regardless of the *blooming Toys*, that deck the one, and of the *noisy Crowds*, that throng the other.

So, said *Aspasio*, may *Theron* and his *Selina*, pleasing and pleased with each other, pass through the busy and the amusing Scenes of Life; neither *captivated* by the one, nor *anxious* for the other. With such harmonious Agreement, and indissoluble Union, may they pursue the Course, marked out by Providence; their Happiness *increasing*, and their Usefulness *inlarging*, as they draw *nearer* the Ocean of all Good. Then, parted by a gentle Stroke of Fate, like the Waters of some ample Stream *severed* by the Piers of an intervening Bridge, may they speedily *reunite*! Reunite in consummate Bliss, and never be separated more!

Ther. I thank You, *Aspasio*, for your affectionate Compliment. Nor can I wish You, by way of Return, a greater Recompence, than the continual Exercise of such a *benevolent* Temper. For, to exercise Benevolence, is to enjoy the most refined and exalted Pleasure; such as makes the nearest Approaches to the Felicity of the eternal Mind; who, as the Scripture most beautifully speaks, *has Pleasure in the Prosperity of his Servants*.

But while We are seated on this Mount, our Situation reminds Us of (what You just now mentioned) the grand Conference relating to the Death of *CHRIST*:—A Business, which you have indeed

accounted for ; but in a Manner, that may be thought not the *most honourable* to the divine Attributes.

Asp. I have represented it, as a *Ransom* for our Souls, and a *Sacrifice* for our Sins. If You disapprove my Account, be pleased to favour me with your own.—For what Purpose, according to *your* Opinion, did that ever blessed Person die ?

Ther. To confirm the *Truth* of his Doctrine, and leave Us a *Pattern* of the most perfect Resignation.

Asp. These are truly noble Ends ; yet these, though noble, were not the *only*, were not the *principal* Designs of that great Event. For, upon such a Supposition, where is the *Difference* between the Death of *CHRIST*, and the Death of the Martyrs ? *They* confirmed the Truth of the Gospel, In *their* Sufferings was Goodness and Obedience ; the same in *Quality*, though not in *Degree*.—Upon such a Supposition, what *Benefit* could the antient Patriarchs receive from the REDEEMER ? Since None could be improved by the Example of his Patience, or the Pattern of his Obedience, till they were *actually exhibited*.—Or how could *CHRIST* be stiled, *The Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World* * ? The Advantages of whose Death, commenced from the very Beginning, as they will be prolonged even to the End of Time.

Not to depend on consequential Arguments, let Us hear the *express* Declaration of our divine Master Himself: *This is my Blood, which is shed—for what ? To give Credibility to my Gospel, or yield an Example of intire Resignation ? Rather—for the*

Remission of Sins *. Will any One attempt to make, The Remission of Sins, and the Proposal of a Pattern, or the Ratification of a Doctrine, *synonymous* Terms?—They, who can torture and transmute the genuine Sense of Words, at this extraordinary rate, may *metamorphose* any Expression into any Meaning.

If then We would consider our LORD's Death, in its *due Amplitude*; We must consider it, both as a Pattern of Piety, and as a Ransom for Sinners. We must neither separate nor confound these very distinct, yet very consistent Effects.

Ther. Is it not inconsistent with the acknowledged Principles of Justice, That the *Innocent* should be punished, instead of the *Offender* ?

Asp. If the innocent Person has an *absolute* Power over his own Life; *willingly* substitutes it in the Place of the Guilty; and, by his vicarious Sufferings, fully answers all the Purposes of a *righteous* Government;—In this Case, which was the Case with our LORD, I see not the least Repugnancy to the Rules of Justice.

The Bible, that authentic Transcript of the Counsels of Heaven, avows; and, by avowing, vindicates the Practice. *The LORD hath laid on Him the Iniquity of Us all* †: made all our Crimes to fall upon

* Matt. xxvi. 28.

† Hai. liii. 6. הפניע בו *made to meet*, or *fall upon*, in an hostile, vindictive Manner; with a Design to take Vengeance, or inflict Death; as an armed Man falls upon his Enemy, or a fierce Lion on the helpless Lamb. This is by far the most usual Signification of the Phrase.

upon the unblameable REDEEMER, and take that Vengeance of Him, which was due to Us.—*He suffered*, says the Apostle, *the Just for the Unjust* *; that, by expiating our Guilt, *He might bring Us to GOD*—now, to his gracious Favour—hereafter, to his blisful Presence.

You will permit me to add a Passage, from our common Favourite *Milton*. Because, it is no less

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beau-

I could not observe, without Surprise and Sorrow, the late Attempt of a learned Writer, to interpret away the Force and Spirit of this Text. He says, “the Word We translate *hath laid*, is the same that We render *meet*, Exod. xxiii. 4. *If Thou meet thine Enemies Ox or Ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring them back to Him again*. And the Meaning is, By Him the LORD *hath caused to meet*, and *stop the Iniquities of Us all*, wherein we have wandered from Him.”

Not to inquire, whether the *Language* be consonant to Grammar; I shall only examine, whether the *Sense* is suitable to Scripture. According to this Gentleman's Idea, the Prophet's Doctrine is as follows; “Our Sins were running away, like a stray Sheep, or like a wandering Ox. But they were met by *CHRIST*; who graciously turned them back, and restored them to their rightful Owner.”—To avoid this glaring Impropriety, our Author has added a kind of Salvo; “to turn *Us* back to Himself, who is the Shepherd of Souls.” But this is to depart from the Prophet's Subject; who is speaking not of *Us*, but of *our Iniquities*. This is to depart from the Tenour of *his own* Explication: If He adheres to the Clue, which He borrows from the Book of *Exodus*, what I have represented, is the unavoidable Consequence.

See! to what wretched Shifts, dishonourable to the Word of GOD, and even to the Art of Criticism, *They* must have recourse! Who refuse to acknowledge, the *real Substitution of CHRIST* in our Stead, and the *proper Atonement made by his Death*.

* 1 Pet. iii. 18.

beautiful in itself, than it is pertinent to the Occasion.
—*Messiah*, pleading in behalf of fallen Men, thus
addresses his Almighty FATHER;

————— *Man, dead in Sins and lost,
Atonement for his Himself; or Offering meet
(Indebted and undone!) hath none to bring.
Behold me then! Me for Him! Life for Life
I offer. On me let thine Anger fall.
Account me Man: I for his Sake will leave
Thy Bosom, and this Glory next to Thee
Freely put off; and for Him lastly die
Well-pleas'd; on me let Death wreak all his Rage*.*

Ther. The fine Imagination of a Poet, will hardly
pass for a decisive Argument. When we are search-
ing after Truth, We must attend to the *Dictates* of
Reason, not follow the *Vagaries* of *Fancy*. And *Rea-*
son, Aspasio, remonstrates against your Notion of a
vicarious Sacrifice. Reason! that primary Guide,
and final Test, both in discovering and determining
the Sense of Scripture.

Asp. Suppose You then, my dear *Theron*, that
None are in Possession of Reason, but the Pupils of
Socinus, and the Zealots for *Deism*? Or, that None
make use of Reason, in their religious Inquiries, but
Men of this Mould?

*Wrong not the Christian, think not Reason yours;
'Tis Reason our great Master holds so dear;
'Tis Reason's injur'd Rights his Wrath resents;
'Tis Reason's Voice obey'd his Glories crown.
Through Reason's Wounds alone thy Faith can die †.*

Poets,

* Milton, B. III. 233. † Night-Thoughts, N° IV.

Poets, You see, are far from disclaiming Reason. Equally far is Christianity from discarding the *sober*, the *sanctified* Use of this noble Faculty. When Reason is under the Influence and Direction of the *divine* SPIRIT, We have the same high Opinion of Excellence, as You. And, when thus regulated, We have, I am persuaded, the Sanction of her Authority, for all our Sentiments.

Reason, as She operated in the Sages of the Hea-then World, instead of rejecting, approved and adopted this very Scheme. Approved it, even under the Disadvantage of a *mutilated, disfigured, and extremely impaired* Form. The current Language of the Classic Authors, and almost every Historian of *Greece and Rome*, are Vouchers for the Truth of this Observation *.—As the *Gentiles* were unanimous in the Custom of offering Sacrifices, and equally unanimous in supposing their vicarious Nature, so also are the *Jewish* Writers.

Ther. What Man of Sense, pays any Regard to the *Jewish* Writers? *Legendary* they are, and *extravagant* to the last Degree. Dotards I might call them, rather than Writers.

Asp. They are, I believe, extravagant enough in their Comments upon Scripture. But they relate, with sufficient Exactness and Fidelity, the *prevailing Belief* of their Nation. In this Case, their Testimony is as unexceptionable; as in the other, their Notions are chimerical.—Now, had it been a mistaken Belief, surely our blessed LORD, that *infallible* Judge, and *impartial* Reprover, would have testi-

* See the Note, in Dialogue III. pag. 76, 77.

fied his Disapprobation of it. Surely his Disciples, who were actuated by the *unerring* and *undaunted* Spirit of their Master, would have entered their Protest against it. Surely St. *Paul*, in his Epistle to that very People, and in his Treatise on that very Subject, would have set Himself to *rectify* such an Error; and have weeded out the Tares, before He sowed the good Seed. But there is not the least Hint of this Kind, in all the Discourses of our SAVIOUR, or in all the Writings of his Apostles.

They speak to a People, who were accustomed to look upon their Sacrifices, as piacular Oblations *, and a typical Expiation of Guilt. They speak of our REDEEMER's Crucifixion, and the Benefits of his Death, in the sacrificial Terms, that were of *current Use*, and *established Signification*. If therefore the popular Opinion was improper, their Manner of Expression and Address, must be calculated rather to authenticate Error, than to propagate Truth.—So that, I think, even the *Silence* of the inspired Penmen on this Occasion, is but little inferior to a *loud Attestation*. Did they only say nothing *against* the Doctrine of Satisfaction by Sacrifice; it would, in effect, and Circumstances considered, be saying Abundance *for* it.—But they are very copious and explicit upon the Point.

Ther. Where are they so copious? If You have such a Heap of their Allegations, it will be easy to pick out a few, and give Us a Specimen.

Asp. It is as easy, *Theron*, as it is delightful.—*Messiah shall be cut off*, says the Prophet *Daniel*, but
not

* This, I think, is incontestably proved by *Outram*, in his Treatise *De Sacrificiis*.

not for Himself*.—For whom then, and for What? *Ifaiah* informs Us concerning both: *For the Transgression of my People was He stricken* †. — Because, this is an Article of the last Importance, it is repeated, it is confirmed, it is explained, with the most remarkable Particularity: *He was wounded for our Transgressions; He was bruised for our Iniquities; the Chastisement of our Peace was upon Him, and with his Stripes We are healed* †.—Our LORD himself asserts the same Truth in the very same Style; *I am the good Shepherd, and lay down my Life for the Sheep* ‖.—St. Paul, in a Multitude of Passages, set his Seal to this momentous Doctrine.—St. Peter maintains it, in very forcible Words; *Who his own Self bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree* §.

The sacred Writers not only assert this capital Article, but use every Diversity of Speech, in order to give it the fullest Evidence, and the strongest Establishment. *He made Reconciliation for the Sins of the People* **. *JESUS CHRIST the Righteous is the Propitiation for our Sins* ††. *He loved Us, and washed Us from our Sins in his own Blood* ††. *He was made Sin for Us, though He knew no Sin* ‖.

Ther. No body makes any Objection to these Texts. But the Sense, the true Sense of such Phrases, is the Thing in Question.

Asp.

* Dan. ix. 26. † *Ifai.* liii. 8. † *Ifai.* liii. 5.
‖ John x. 15.

§ 1 *Pet.* ii. 24. Very forcible Words indeed.—Ο—
αυτος—αμαρτιας ημων—εν τω σωματι αυτου—He bare—Himself
bare—our Sins—in his own Body. Particularly intended,
One would imagine, to make the Article of our LORD's
vicarious Sufferings, clear beyond all Misapprehension,
and sure beyond all Doubt.

** *Heb.* ii. 17.

†† 1 *John* ii. 2.

†† *Rev.* i. 5.

‖ 2 *Cor.* v. 21.

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Asp. What You call *The Question*, to me appears so plain, as not to want a Decision, or admit of a Doubt.

However, since You seem to demand a *critical Scrutiny*, it will not be thought pedantic, if I make an Observation or two upon the original Languages.—*The Chastisement of our Peace*, מוסר שלמונו The Punishment necessary to obtain our Peace, *was* inflicted upon Him. The Prophet considers GOD, under the Character of a righteous Judge, insisting upon Satisfaction to his violated Law. Which being thoroughly made, his Justice acquiesces; He has no farther Demand; but is reconciled to the Offender. Thus *Peace is made by the Blood of the Cross* *.

He gave Himself ἀντιλυτρον υπερ †, *A Ransom for All*. If this does not imply the Notion of *vicarious*, I very much question, whether Language itself can express it. — Λυτρον, is a *Ransom*; which conveys a vicarious Sense, in its most common and authorized Acceptation. — Αντι, which is equivalent to *instead*, still more fully ascertains and strengthens the Idea.— Τπερ, which is translated *for*, and denotes a Substitution of One in the Place of Another †; this added to all, renders the Expression as determinate and emphatical for the Purpose, as Words can possibly be.

Shall I argue from a more obvious Topic, which has no such Dependence on the precise Significancy of the Original? — Surely, says the Prophet; He speaks

* Col. i. 20. † 1 Tim. ii. 6.

† Δευκαλα υπερ Χριστου, *We beseech You in CHRIST's Stead*. 2 Cor. v. 20.—να υπερ συ διακονη μοι, *That in thy Stead He might have ministered unto me*. Philem. ver. 13. As I was considering

speaks with Vehemence, as of an Affair that is *very weighty*; He speaks with Confidence, as of a Fact that is *very certain*: *He hath borne our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows* *. What can this mean, but He hath taken upon Himself *that Affliction*, and *those Miseries*, which properly belonged to Us? — Let us read on, and this Meaning will present itself, in the clearest View. *We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of GOD, and afflicted*: We took Him for a real Malefactor, and thought that He was punished for *his own* Misconduct. In opposition to which injurious and false Surmise, it is added; *But He was wounded for our Transgressions, He was bruised for our Iniquities*. — May I not here borrow the Prophet's Language, and say with an Air of Certainty? *Surely*, this is the plainest Proof in the World, that our Sins were the meritorious Cause of *CHRIST's* Sufferings. And if our Sins were the meritorious Cause

considering the Force of this Argument, a certain four-looking gloomy Person came in my way; and desired, I would introduce Him to *Theron* and *Aspasio*, as an Evidence for fixing the Signification of the Preposition *pro*, when spoken of the Death of *CHRIST*. — I must confess, I did not like his Appearance, at the first sight; and do not know, that any body has made use of Him, on this Occasion. But *St. John* stood by, and said; “Introduce Him. He prophesies in this Instance.” — Perhaps, the Reader is at a loss to guess, *Whom* I mean. To keep Him no longer in Suspence, I mean *Caiaphas* the High-Priest. — He bears the following Testimony; IT IS EXPEDIENT FOR US, THAT ONE MAN DIE FOR THE PEOPLE, AND THAT THE WHOLE NATION PERISH NOT. — Now, as *to perish* signifies, not only to die, but to die miserably; if One dies for all, that all may not die miserably, I cannot but think, He must die *INSTEAD* of All. See *John* xi. 50.

* *Isai.* liii. 4.

Cause of his Sufferings, our Guilt must be charged upon Him, and punished in Him.

The Apostle affirms, That *CHRIST* has delivered Us from the Curse of the Law *. How? By taking our Place, and enduring what We deserved. Or, as He Himself speaks, to the same Effect, but in a much more emphatical Manner, *by being made a Curse for Us*. Does not this evidently denote both a Commutation of Persons, and a Translation of Punishment? He suffered, who was innocent; not *We*, who are guilty.—He also suffered *that very* Sentence, which the Law denounced on Us. For, it is written, *Cursed is every One that continueth not in all Things †*; to this We were obnoxious. It is written again, *Cursed is every One that hangeth on a Tree ‡*; to this *CHRIST* submitted. And if *CHRIST* endured *that very* Curse, which We deserved: if, by this means, He delivered Us from *all* Malediction: either this must be suffering in *our* Stead || or else Nothing can be called by that Name.

Shall

* Gal. iii. 13. † Deut. xxvii. 26. ‡ Gal. iii. 13.

|| “ This, says Dr. South, in his smart Manner, is spoke so plain and loud by the universal Voice of the whole Book of GOD, that Scripture must be crucified as well as *CHRIST*, to give any other tolerable Sense of the Expressions.”—And not Scripture only, but the common Import of Language. What says *Mexentius*? When his Son, interpoling in his Behalf, is slain by *Aeneas*.

————— *Pro me hostili paterer succedere Dextrae
Quem genui? Tuane hæc Genitor per Vulnera servor?
Morte tuâ vivens?*

Here, the Father is *saved* by his Son's Wounds; *lives* by his Son's Death. How, and in what Manner? By a
Sub-

Shall I descend lower still, and refer our Point to the Determination of *illiterate Men*? — Ask any of your Tenants, What Ideas arise in *their Minds*, upon the Perusal of the afore-mentioned Texts? — I dare venture to foretel, that, artless and unimproved as their Understandings are, they will not *hesitate* for an Answer. They will neither complain of Obscurity, nor ask the Assistance of Learning. But will *immediately* discern in all these Passages, a gracious REDEEMER suffering in their Stead; and, by his bitter, but expiatory Passion, procuring the Pardon of all their Sins. — Nay farther; as they are not accustomed to the Finesses of Criticism, I apprehend, they will be at a loss to conceive, how it is *possible* to understand such Passages in *any other* Sense.

Say not, this is an improper Appeal; or these are *incompetent* Judges. The Scriptures were written for *their* Edification; not to exercise the Ingenuity of subtle Disputants, but to instruct the *meanest* of Mankind in the Way of Salvation. Therefore, on fundamental Articles, We may assuredly conclude, The Expression will be easy, and the Doctrine *perspicuous*:

Substitution of One instead of the Other; by the Son's *suffering*, what must otherwise have *fallen* upon the Father. — Should the *Socinian* Interpreters try the same Experiment on these Lines of *Virgil*, which they make upon Passages of a parallel Signification in Scripture; is there a Critic in the whole World, that *could approve*, that *could endure*, such flagrant Violations of Grammar, Sense, and Taste? — Yet I believe, there is no sincere Christian, but would readily and gratefully say;

— *Pro me ultrici succedere Dextra*
Dignasti. Tua CHRISTE DEUS per Vulnera servor;
Morte tuâ vivens.

spicuous: so that *He who runs may read, and the Way-faring Men, though Fools**, shall not err therein. — And, though I am far from undervaluing the Aids of Literature, yet, upon those momentous Subjects, which are inseparably connected with our eternal Felicity, I cannot but regard the *common Sense* of plain, serious, humble Christians, as the very best of Critics.

Ther. It has been said by a learned Critic, That vicarious Punishment or Suffering, gives us too low Ideas of the Son of GOD, as it sinks them to the Pain and Suffering of a Malefactor, the very meanest Idea We can have of them.

Asp. The Idea is plainly suggested by the Word of Prophecy, and supported by the Attestation of sacred History. In *that* it was foretold, and in *this* it is recorded, That *He was numbered with Transgressors* †. — To this Purpose speaks St. Paul, though somewhat more cautiously than your Critic. He was made, not indeed *sinful* Flesh, but in the *Likeness* of sinful Flesh; and, though perfectly innocent, was left to endure the Vengeance due to the vilest Mifcreant.

Yes, my dear *Theron*; that glorious Person, whom the highest Angel adores, *suffered, as if He had been the Criminal, the Pain and Punishment, which We,*

or

* Isai. xxxv. 8. The Word *Fools*, seems to denote Persons of *slow* Understanding, and *dull* Apprehension; as Luke xxiv. 25. Or else it signifies Those, who, for want of a cultivated Education and the Ornaments of Literature, are *accounted* Fools by the Sons of Science; as 1 Cor. i. 27.

† Isai. liii. 12.

Luke xxii. 37.

or equivalent to that which *We*, the real Criminals, should have suffered.—If, to consider this, gives Us a low Idea; if, to suffer this, was a deep Abasement; how exceedingly *high*, and how immensely *grand*, is the Goodness and the Grace manifested therein! The lower You draw the Arrow on the String, the loftier Flight it makes in the Sky. And the greater our LORD's Humiliation for Us, the more wonderful and adorable his Love to Us.

Ther. As there cannot be a vicarious Guilt, or as no One can be guilty in the Stead of Another, so there cannot be a vicarious Punishment, or no One can be punished instead of Another. Because Punishment, in its very Nature, connotes Guilt in the Person who bears it.

Asp. If You mean by Guilt, the *Consciousness* of having committed a Sin, and the internal *Defilement* consequent upon it, We never suppose *such* a vicarious Guilt. It is never affirmed, that *CHRIST* was stung with the Remorse, or stained with the Pollution, of the adulterous *David*, the perfidious *Peter*, and the persecuting *Saul*. But, that He was *treated* by the righteous *GOD*, as if He had perpetrated these, and all the Crimes of all Believers, either in the past or succeeding Ages.

If by Guilt You mean, The *Charge* of a criminal Action, and The *Obligation* to suffer Penalty, your Assertion is nothing more than begging the Question. It nakedly affirms the very Thing in Debate. And bare Affirmations, unsupported by Evidence, are seldom admitted as decisive Proofs.—We, on the other Hand affirm, That all our criminal Actions were charged upon *CHRIST*; and that He suffered the Punish-

Punishment, which they deserved. The former of these, is not so properly called vicarious Guilt, as *real Guilt*, contracted by One, imputed to Another. The latter We readily allow to be *vicarious Punishment*, sustained in their Stead, whose Guilt was imputed.—For both these Points, We have the Authority of Truth itself, speaking in the Scriptures. *The LORD laid on Him the Iniquities of Us all*; here is the Imputation. *CHRIST has redeemed Us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for Us*; here is the vicarious Punishment. And You know, *to what Casuists* We submit the Interpretation of these Texts—common Sense, and an honest Heart.

Ther. Is not this *shocking* to suppose? *horrid* to affirm? If Guilt was really imputed to *CHRIST*, then Punishment was his due—Justice might insist upon it—And He could not escape it.

Asp. To suppose this, is so far from shocking my Apprehension, that it appears, even on *your own* Principles, right and necessary.—*Right*, because Punishment, as You yourself have declared, always connotes Guilt; I would add, either contracted, or at least imputed. And indeed the Sufferings of *CHRIST* could not be of a *penal* Nature, unless He endured them as under a Charge of Guilt.—It is *necessary* to suppose this, otherwise how will You vindicate the Justice of GOD? He bid his Sword awake, and smite * the blessed *JESUS*. But shall the Judge of all the Earth *do wrong*? Shall He smite, where there is nothing but Innocence? No Guilt, either personal or imputed? That be far from Him! The Thought be far from Us!

Whereas,

* Zech. xiii. 7.

Whereas, upon this Supposition, it becomes a *just* and *righteous* Thing, that GOD should inflict, and that *CHRIST* should sustain, the most rigorous Punishment. And I do not know, but this might be the Cause of our LORD's Silence, when He was accused at *Pilate's* Bar and at *Herod's* Judgment-Seat. It is probable, He considered Himself as standing before a higher Tribunal; and responsible to eternal Justice, for the criminal Actions of all his People. In this Situation, and in this Capacity, clear Himself of *personal* Demerit He could; clear himself of *imputed* Guilt He could not. *Therefore* He was dumb; He opened not his Mouth. For though, as the *Son* of the *most high* GOD, Glory and Immortality were his undoubted Right; yet, as the *Surety* for *sinful Men*, Tribulation and Death were his condign Portion.

And why should this be thought shocking? It is not the *least Derogation* to the transcendent Excellency of *CHRIST*. It casts not the *least Stain* on the unspotted Sanctity, either of his Nature, or his Life.—To bear Sin, as a *voluntary* Surety, is infinitely different from committing it, as an *actual* Transgressor. To say, that *CHRIST* was punished for any Irregularity of *his own*, would be false, impious, and horrid. To say, that He was charged with *our* Guilt, and endured the Punishment due—in the plain and full Sense of the Word *due*—to our Sins; is so far from being injurious to his Dignity, that it pays the *proper* Honour to his *mediatorial* Undertaking. It pays Him the Honour of — the highest Obedience to his FATHER's Will—the deepest Humiliation of his own illustrious Person—and the most boundless Benevolence to Mankind.

Ther. GOD is Love, *Aspasio*, all Love. Whereas You would—

Asp. I do not often interrupt my Friend's Discourse. But I cannot forbear interposing a Query, on this Occasion.—Is there, then, no *just Displeasure* in the DEITY? What meaneth that solemn Denunciation of the supreme Lawgiver? *The Anger of the LORD shall smoke against that Man* *.—What meaneth that awful Declaration of the Apostle? *The Wrath of GOD is revealed from Heaven, upon all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men* †.—Or, in what Sense are We to explain that alarming Interrogatory of the Prophet? *Who can stand before his Indignation? And who can abide in the Fierceness of his Anger* ‡?—Whence could those avenging Visitations proceed, which destroyed *Sodom and Gomorrah* with a Tempest of Fire ||? Which swept away so many Thousands of the *polluted Israelites* with a raging Pestilence §? And consigned over so many Millions ¶ of *rebellious Angels* to Chains of Darkness?

Surely, *Theron*, if there be any determinate Signification in Language; if any Lesson to be learnt from the

* Deut. xxix. 20. † Rom. i. 18. ‡ Nah. i. 6.

|| Gen. xix. 24. § Num. xxv. 9.

¶ *Millions*—The Number of the fallen Angels is nowhere specified; and the Veil sits deep upon the spiritual World; so that We can see no farther, than Revelation has discovered. Yet, I think, there is sufficient Room to ground a *Conjecture*, upon the Reply which one of those execrable Apostates made to our LORD. *My Name is Legion*; a Word signifying a great Multitude, five or

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the most tremendous Judgments ; it is, That the LORD, though free from all the *Discomposure* of Passion, is nevertheless *angry with the Wicked* * ; and will make impenitent Sinners feel the Effects of his wise and holy Indignation.

Ther. Does not your Doctrine represent the all-merciful GOD, as a *rigorous* Being ? Who, when once displeased, will hardly be pacified ? Whereas, the LORD himself declares by his Prophet ; *Fury is not in me.*—Men of satirical Wit would be apt to insinuate, That You had mistaken JEHOVAH for *Moloch* ; and was erecting a Christian Church in the Valley of the Son of *Hinnom*.

Asp. We take our Representations of GOD, not from the vain Conjectures of Men, but from the Records of infallible Truth. There he is described, as a *righteous* GOD ; a *jealous* † GOD ; and, to Christ-less Sinners, a *consuming Fire* ‡. Though wonderfully condescending, yet transcendently majestic, Insomuch, that none of the fallen Race are admitted to *approach* his Throne, but only through the Intervention of a great MEDIATOR § ; and, without shedding of Blood, even the Blood of a Person higher than the Heavens, there is *no Remission* § for any of their Offences.

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six thousand. Therefore He adds, *for We are many.* If so many were employed in tempting and tormenting a *single* Person, what Armies, what Myriads of those invisible Enemies, must exist through *universal* Nature !—It is an *awful* Thought ; and should make Us fly to our divine Protector, and Almighty Deliverer. See Mark v. 9. and 2 Pet. ii. 4.

* Psal. vii. 11. Deut. ix. 8.

† Exod. xx. 5.

‡ Heb. xii. 29.

§ John xiv. 6.

§ Heb. ix. 22.

Heb. vii. 26.

Yet in all this, there is not the least Tincture of *Fury*. *Fury* implies an immoderate Degree of Resentment, that will hearken to no Reasoning, and accede to no Terms. The Gospel Account proves, even to a Demonstration, that this has no Place in the divine Nature. So far from it, that GOD, though highly provoked, has *provided* an Atonement—has made *Overtures* of Reconciliation to his disobedient Creatures—has even *befought* * a guilty World, to accept of Forgiveness. So that the Insinuations of your satyrical Gentlemen, are as egregiously mistaken, as they are shockingly worded.

You are a Man of *Sense*, *Theron*; and esteem that Character, far above the idle Reputation of a *Wit*. As such, let me ask You seriously; Is it not for the Honour of the divine Majesty, to exercise *Justice*, as well as *Mercy*? Always to pardon, and never to punish, would be *Tameness*, rather than *Benignity*; a Renunciation of Holiness, rather than a Display of Goodness.—Or, can it be right in Us, so extravagantly

* 2 Cor. v. 20. It was an Instance of singular Compassion in the blessed GOD, that, though offended with *Job's* Friends, He *admitted* of a Sacrifice, and *directed* them to an Intercessor; both typical of *CHRIST JESUS*. But what *unparalleled* Condescension, and *divinely* tender Mercies, are displayed in this Verse! *As though* GOD *did beseech* You *by* Us: *We pray* You in *CHRIST's* stead, *be ye reconciled* to GOD.—Did the Judge ever beseech a condemned Criminal, to accept of Pardon? Does the Creditor beseech a ruined Debtor, to receive an Acquittance in full? Yet our Almighty LORD, and our eternal Judge, not only vouchsafes to offer these Blessings, but invites Us—intreats Us—with the most tender and repeated Importunity solicits Us—not to reject them!

ly to magnify the *amiable*, as to depreciate, nay even annihilate, the *awful* Attributes of the DEITY?—This, says a Poet, is the Theology, not of Christians, but of Infidels ;

*Who set at Odds Heaven's jarring Attributes,
And with one Excellence another wound ;
Maim Heaven's Perfection, break its equal Beams,
Bid Mercy triumph over—GOD himself ;
Undeified by their opprobrious Praise :
A GOD all Mercy is a GOD unjust *.*

Ther. But We have lately been told, that the pardoning Grace of the Lawgiver is not obstructed by any Demands of Law and Justice. For He can set them aside.

Asp. What ! Set aside a Law, that is holy, righteous, and good !—Set aside a Justice, that is eternal, inflexible, and infinite !—*St. Paul* gives a very different Solution of this Difficulty. He tells Us—not that GOD set aside his Law and his Justice—but that He set forth the blessed JESUS for a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood : with this express Design, that He might declare his Righteousness † ; might demonstrate, not only his Clemency, but his Justice ; even that vindictive Justice, whose essential Character and principal Office is, to punish Sin.

This seems to be the Import of the Word *Righteousness*, in the present Connection. And, I think, more than seems, if We consult the following Verse :
To declare, I say, at this Time his Righteousness ; that

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He might be just *, evidence Himself to be strictly and inviolably righteous, in the Administration of his Government; even while He is *the* all-forgiving gracious Justifier of the Sinner that believeth in JESUS.

—According to this Plan, *Mercy and Truth meet together; Righteousness and Peace kiss each other* †: all the Attributes harmonize; every Attribute is glorified; and not one superseded, no, nor so much as clouded.

Ther. If some are verging to one Extreme, are not you inclining to the other? Our Ears tingle, and our Blood runs chill, at the very Thoughts of so *severe* a Vengeance, executed on an Object so *worthy* and *illustrious*.—Besides, how can We suppose, that the beneficent CREATOR and PRESERVER of Men, should *take Pleasure* in the Sufferings of the most unblameable Person, that ever existed? Especially, since He himself has made this tender Declaration; *I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice* ‡.

Asp. A tender Declaration indeed it is: signifying, that GOD is better pleased with the Duties of Humanity and Charity, than with the most costly and pompous Train of Sacrifices. Nay, that He will even *dispense* with the Observance of *his own* ceremonial Institutions, when they interfere with our Exercise of Beneficence *One to another*. Thus resigning (so admirable is his Goodness!) the Services due to Himself,

* Rom. iii. 26. *That He might be just, and the Justifier of the Ungodly.* The Attribute of Justice *must* be preserved inviolate. And inviolate it *is* preserved, if there was a real Infliction of Punishment on our SAVIOUR. Nothing else can thoroughly *clear up* this great Evangelical Paradox.

† Psal. lxxxv. 10.

‡ Matt. ix. 13.

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self, for the Benefit and Comfort of his Creatures.— But all this has no Sort of Relation to the Sacrifice of *CHRIST*: which was the most noble, and the most acceptable Oblation, ever made to the King of Heaven.

We are assured by a Prophet, That *it pleased the LORD to bruise his holy Child JESUS*. GOD not only gave up his Son to Sufferings, but gave Him up with a divine Complacency *.— In like manner, the blessed *JESUS* addressed Himself to the dreadful Task, not only without Reluctance, but with the utmost Alacrity †. *I delight to do thy Will*, was the Language of his Soul.—Should You ask; How could

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the

* *Divine Complacency*.—This is the Idea included in the original Word, צפצף Isai. liii. 10. It corresponds with the Phrase, used by the Voice from Heaven, *audomora*, Matt. iii. 17. Or, it may be very exactly translated by St. Paul's beautiful Expression, *ωαγαυωται*, Heb. xiii. 16. — And therefore the great J E H O V A H is said to smell a sweet Savour, or a *Savour of Rest* נִיחַח נִיחַח in those Sacrifices, which prefigured the crucified *JESUS*, Gen. viii. 21.

† *Utmost Alacrity*. — There is no *Inconsistency* between this Assertion, and our LORD's Supplication; *Father, if be possible, let this Cup pass from me: nevertheless, not my Will, but thine be done*. Such a deprecatory Request, put up with so much Earnestness, yet with so much Submission, only shews the *extreme Severity* of our REDEEMER's Anguish, and the *prodigious Weight* of his Woes. And this indeed it shews, beyond the Power of Description.—His ardent Love to Mankind, and his fervent Zeal for his FATHER's Glory, made Him *desire* these Sufferings. His invincible Resolution and unequalled Magnanimity, emboldened Him not to decline, but to *meet* them. Yet they were so great, so terrible, that his Nature, being *human*, could not but *recoil* a little, and be *startled* at their Approach; and, had it not been *divine* also, must inevitably have *sunk* under the Load.

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the SON take Pleasure in undergoing, or the FATHER in inflicting, such amazing Sorrows? No otherwise, than upon Account of those grand and everlasting Advantages, which were to result from them.

A severe Vengeance, You say, such as makes our Ears to tingle.—This is the very Thing intended, to *awaken* and *alarm* presumptuous Offenders. That they “may hear, and fear, and do no more wickedly.” It is such a Method of dispensing Grace, as secures the utmost Reverence to the divine Commands. Strikes the deepest Terror, even while it cherishes the brightest Hope—strikes the *deepest Terror*, on every persevering Sinner—cherishes the *brightest Hope*, in every penitent Transgressor.

Ther. If one of my Servants had affronted or injured me; I should, upon his *submissive Acknowledgment*, forgive his Fault, and not insist upon Satisfaction for the Wrong. Will You make the Father of Compassions, *more inexorable* in his Nature, *more rigid* in his Demands, than a human Master?

Asp. When You have a Servant, that owes his Being to your Power; that has received innumerable Benefits from your Bounty; yet has offered You innumerable Affronts, all attended with the most aggravating Circumstances, and all in *Defiance* of the *most righteous* Threatenings.—When You are possessed of infinite Majesty, and unspotted Sanctity; when Truth inviolable, and Justice inflexible, are essential to your Character.—Then, *Theron*, the Parallel will hold good; and *Your* Conduct shall be a Pattern for the Procedure of JEHOVAH.

Till then, You and I must be willing to forgive, because GOD has made it our *bounden* Duty; and
because

because We have *incomparably more* to be forgiven by the Judge of the World, than We can possibly remit to our Fellow-creatures.—In the mean Time, You will allow the great GOD, who is *glorious in Holiness*, to communicate his heavenly Favours, in a Manner becoming Himself. On such *august* and *honourable* Terms, as shall maintain the Rights of his universal Government, and manifest the Glory of his adorable Attributes.

Ther. Might not GOD have cancelled our Transgressions, and received fallen Men into his Favour, without any Propitiation? — To deny this, would be to limit the HOLY ONE of *Israel*; and impose Conditions on that uncontrollable Sovereign, *Who giveth not Account of any of his Matters.*

Asp. We need not embarrass Ourselves, by entering upon Inquiries, which may seem to lie beyond the Limits of human Understanding. Enough for Us to know, that this Propitiation was *absolutely necessary* with regard to the first Covenant. For, as GOD had solemnly declared, *In the Day Thou eatest thereof, dying Thou shalt die*; his Truth and Justice stood engaged to make the Threatening good. And no second *Adam* could restore the first, but by taking this Curse upon Himself.

*Die Man, or Justice must; unless for Him
Some Other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid Satisfaction, Death for Death*.*

Therefore the divine *JESUS*, who lay in the Bosom of the FATHER, and knew the Counsels
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* Milton, B. III. 210.

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of Heaven, says, *The Son of Man MUST be lifted up** on the Cross. There was a *Necessity* for his Crucifixion. Because, this was *stipulated* in the Covenant of Peace, made between the FATHER and the SON.—Because, it was expressly *foretold* by the ancient Prophets (and the Scripture cannot be broken) that the REDEEMER *should be cut off out of the Land of the Living*. — Because, a Variety of Types, and a Multitude of Sacrifices, *prefigured* his Death: *one* of the Types, pointed out the very *Manner* of his Suffering; and *all* the Sacrifices, detached from their Dependency on this great Oblation, would have been *beggarly Elements*, —mere unavailing empty Ceremonies.

I apprehend, it is no Limitation of the great GOD, to suppose Him incapable of acting otherwise, than in *perfect* and *perpetual* Consistency with Himself.—Neither is it any Infringement on his absolute Sovereignty, that He cannot but order all Affairs, *for the Honour* of his Justice, his Fidelity, and each of his
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* *John* iii. 14. *Δι τού, &c.* The same Expression is used, *Luke* xxiv. 26. — Perfectly conformable to this leading Truth, is the current Language both of the Law and of the Gospel. Under the *Law*, GOD himself says; *I have sworn, that the Iniquity of the House of Eli shall not be purged with Sacrifice or Offering for ever*; that is, the Guilt shall never be expiated, *1 Sam.* iii. 14. Under the *Gospel*, the Apostle declares; *If we sin wilfully, by a final Apostacy from CHRIST, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins*; they are, to such Persons, and in such Circumstances, absolutely irremissible. *Heb.* x. 26. — Which Phrases are evidently connected with, and founded on, this grand Doctrine; That the appointed, the *only* Way of obtaining Pardon from the righteous GOD, 'is, by the Intervention of an expiatory Sacrifice.

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exalted Perfections.—This is the very Thing, which the sacred Writers express, in their plain but strong Language; *GOD who cannot lie*: He cannot deny Himself†.*

Ther. GOD is often said to *forgive* our Sins; particularly, in that sublime Passage, where He proclaims his Name to *Moses*. *The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in Goodness and Truth; keeping Mercy for thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin.* Now, Pardon is a *free* Thing. Freeness is implied in the very Nature of Forgiveness. Take away the former, and You destroy the latter.—If an *Equivalent* be given, Pardon is no longer Pardon, but a *Purchase*. Forgiveness ceases to be an Act of Grace, and becomes the Payment of a Debt.

Asp. The Text You quote is truly sublime, and equally comfortable. But You forget to mention one Article of very great Moment, which closes and completes the glorious Character. Which seems added on purpose, to prevent any *wrong Apprehensions* of the DEITY, and to guard against all *Abuse* of the Doctrine. *He will in no wise clear the Guilty†.*—
GOD

* Tit. i. 2.

† 2 Tim. ii. 13.

† *He will in no wise clear the Guilty.* Exod. xxxiv. 7. This Text is not without its Difficulty, especially in the Original.—*Steuchus* interprets the Words, *Et innocens non erit sine Piatulo*: He shall not be acquitted without a piacular Sacrifice.—I think, they may be translated, with a little more Propriety and Exactness, thus; *Pardoning Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin, וְנָקָה לֹא יִנָּקֶה though not with Impunity*; or rather, *though He will by no means let it*
it

GOD will not, on *any Consideration* whatever, absolve the obstinate, persevering, irreclaimable Offender: neither will He acquit any of the guilty Race, *absolutely, unconditionally*, or without such a Satisfaction, as may repair the Honour of his injured Law.

We have Redemption through his Blood, says the Apostle, *even the Forgiveness of our Sins* *. It is Forgiveness, You see, though bought with a Price. It is Remission, though procured by Blood.—It is free, with regard to that *sovereign Being*, who pardons. For, He was under no Obligation to admit of a propitiatory Sacrifice; but might, without any Diminution of his Dignity, have left all Mankind to perish in their Sins.—It is free, with regard to the *obnoxious Creatures*, who are pardoned. For, it is vouchsafed, without any Satisfaction demanded at *their Hands*, or any Penalty inflicted on *their Persons*.—It is in this respect also free; that an Interest in the great Atonement is granted to Us, without the

it *go unpunished*, meaning *Sin*: which is the immediate *Antecedent*; is expressed in the three preceding Words; and may very properly be referred to in this Clause. Then the Sense will be, as follows; “Though GOD “pardons Sin, yet it shall not go unpunished. He will “certainly inflict his righteous Vengeance, and exercise “his punitive Justice, though not on the Sinner, whom “He spares; yet on the SURETY, whom He has provided.”—In the same manner Cocceius renders the Passage, *Et non exercens Impunitatem*; and expounds it much to the same Purpose.—We have this very Word in the same remarkable Construction, *Jer. xxx. 11.* תִּקַּח לֹא אֶנְקָה which is translated, and I will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

* Eph. i. 7.

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the least Merit, or any *deserving* Qualifications of our own.

In all this, GOD is not only merciful, but most tenderly and immensely merciful. And will any One calumniate this adorable Method of exercising Mercy? Because Provision is also made for the Glory of GOD's Truth, GOD's Holiness, and supreme Authority?

Ther. Does not your Notion of a propitiatory Sacrifice, derogate from the Goodness of the *Almighty FATHER*; and transfer all our Obligations to the *incarnate SON*?

Asp. Is there not Goodness, in *allowing* a Substitute to suffer in our Stead?—Is there not still greater Goodness, in *providing* a Substitute for Us, without any Solicitation on our Part?—Is there not the very highest Exertion of Goodness, in appointing a *dear*, an *only*, an *incomparably* excellent SON for the Purpose?—This marvelous Scheme, far, very far from obscuring, most illustriously displays, the superabundant Loving-kindness of the *FATHER*.

GOD *so* loved the *World*, apostate and polluted as it was—*How* did He love it? To a Degree, unutterable by any Tongue; inconceivable by any Imagination; and only to be expressed by the infinitely precious Effects. *Loved it SO, that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting Life**. And does this derogate from the Goodness of the *Almighty FATHER*, to give, not barely Pardon and Life, but give them through the Hands, nay, through the *Wounds*,

* John iii. 16.

Wounds, the Agonies, the Death of his divinest, dearest SON?

Such Privileges, vouchsafed on any Terms, must challenge the devoutest Acknowledgments. But, when attended with this *additional* Demonstration of Favour, they are enough to *inflame* Us with Gratitude, and *transport* Us with Admiration. They not only manifest, but *commend** the divine Love; shew it to the greatest Advantage, in the highest Perfection, with every Circumstance of Recommendation and Endearment.—By this means, blessed GOD, Thou hast unspeakably enhanced thy Benefits! Thou hast rendered them, though invaluable in *themselves*, exceedingly more so, by the *Manner* of conferring them!

Ther. Again in your Elevations, *Aspasio*?—The World, You know, is grown very *rational* and *inquisitive*; will admit nothing but upon clear Evidence, and full Conviction. We expect in all religious Inquiries, not the Flights of Fancy, or Flourishes of Rhetoric, but a Sobriety of Reason and Solidity of Argument.

Asp. The World, rational as it is, seems, by the Taste of the present Age, no Enemy to *Works of Fancy*

* Rom. v. 8. *Εὐαγγελιστῶν*. It seems to be an Image taken from the Practice of *Tradesmen*. Who, in shewing their Goods, point out their Excellencies; and set, in the clearest Light, whatever may bespeak their Worth, or recommend them to the Purchaser.—Perhaps, it may allude to the Custom of sending, with some favourite and and worthy Person, *recommendatory Letters*. In which his good Qualities are described; and every thing is mentioned, that may embellish his Character, and render his Presence acceptable. In this Sense St. Paul uses those nearly related Words, *συμβιβαν, συστατικῶν*, 2 Cor. iii. 1.

DIALOGUE IV. 143

Fancy. The World, therefore, may not be displeased with an affecting Story. And a Story, suitable to the Occasion, just occurs to my Mind. Such as may serve to *shadow forth*, though very faintly, the surpassing Benignity and Grace of our crucified LORD.

An *Asiatic* Queen, departing this Life, left behind Her three accomplished Sons ; all arrived to Years of Maturity.—The young Princes were at Strife, who should pay the *highest Respect* to their royal Mother's Memory. To give scope for their generous Contention, they agreed to meet at the Place of her Interment ; and there present the most honourable Gift, they knew how to devise, or were able to procure.—The *Eldest* came, and exhibited a sumptuous Monument ; consisting of the richest Materials, and ornamented with the most exquisite Workmanship.—The *Second* ransacked all the Beauties of the blooming Creation ; and offered a Garland of such admirable Colours, and delightful Odours, as had never been known before.—The *Youngest* appeared, without any pompous Preparation ; having only a crystal Basin in one Hand, and a silver Bodkin in the other. As soon as he approached the Tomb, He threw open his Breast ; pierced a Vein, that lay opposite to his Heart ; received the Blood in the transparent Vase ; and, with an Air of affectionate Reverence, placed it on the beloved Parent's Monument.—The Spectators, struck with the Sight, burst into a Shout of general Applause ; and immediately gave the Preference to this last Oblation.

If it was reckoned such a singular Expression of Love, to expend a *few* of those precious Drops, for the

the Honour of a *Parent*: O! how matchless! how ineffable was the Love of *JESUS*, in pouring out all his vital Blood, for the Salvation of *Enemies*!

Ther. My greatest Objection is still to come.— If *CHRIST* suffered in our Stead; He must suffer *that very* Punishment, which was due to our Iniquities. This your orthodox Divines affirm to be incomparably worse than bodily Death; to be nothing less than the everlasting Displeasure of *GOD*.

Asp. The Punishment due to our Iniquities, was Shame, Death, and the divine Wrath,

As for *Shame*—Was ever Shame, like that Shame, which our despised *REDEEMER* bore?—*Born* in a Stable, and laid in a Manger.—When an *Infant*, exiled from his own Country, and a Vagabond in the Earth.—When engaged in the Discharge of his *Ministry*, accused of the most flagitious Crimes, and branded with the blackest Names.—When brought to his *Exit*, apprehended as a Thief; condemned as a Malefactor; nay, the vilest of Malefactors, a Robber and Murderer, is preferred before Him.—His Executioners poured Contempt upon all his venerable Offices. As a *King*, they ridiculed Him, by putting a Mock-Sceptre into his Hand; and crowning Him with ragged Thorns*, instead of a royal Diadem. They villified his *prophetic* Character, by hood-winking his Eyes; striking his blessed Head

* To have crowned the blessed *JESUS* with *Straw*, would have been a vile Insult, and treating Him like an ambitious Madman. But to crown Him with *keen, pungent, lacerating* Thorns, was adding Cruelty to their Insults; unheard of Barbarity to the most contemptuous Mockery. *Matt.* xxvii. 29.

Head; and then asking, in cruel Derision, *Who it was that smote Him* *. They cast Reproach upon his *priestly* Undertaking, when they sharpened their Tongues with malicious Irony, and shot out those bitter Words; *He saved Others, Himself He cannot save* †. — To render his Infamy as *public*, as it was *shocking*, they hung Him on a Tree; and exposed Him, defiled as He was with Spitting, and disfigured with Wounds, to the gazing Eyes and contumelious Scoffs of numberless Spectators.

If You doubt, whether *CHRIST* sustained the *Wrath* of *GOD*, let Us follow Him to the Garden of *Gethsemane*. A Scene, which I would always recollect, when I walk along the *fertile Vale*, or expatiate amidst the *flowery Garden* ‡, or enjoy the Delights of any *rural Retirement*. — He had no Remorse, to alarm his spotless Conscience; yet *Fearfulness* and *Trembling* came upon Him. No Violence was offered to his sacred Person; yet a *horrible Dread* overwhelmed Him. — 'Twas Night, cold Night; and though our divine *MASTER* lay prostrate upon the Earth, amidst the Fall of chilling Dews, He *sweat* — sweat *Blood* — sweat *great Drops* of Blood, *running down* in reeking Streams to the Ground. — He was anointed with the Oil of Gladness above his Fellows ||. — Yet so insupportable was his Affliction, that He could

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not

* Scornfully insinuating, that his sacred prophetic Office was fit for nothing, but to serve such despicable Purposes. *Matt.* xxvi. 68.

† *Matt.* xxvii. 42.

‡ Alluding to the Evangelist's Description of *Gethsemane*, who represents it as a *Garden*; and to the Etymology of the Hebrew, which signifies a *fat* or fruitful *Vale*, *גן שומן*. *John* xviii. 1. *Matt.* xxvi. 36.

|| *Psal.* xlv. 7.

not forbear crying out, *My Soul is sorrowful—exceeding sorrowful—sorrowful even unto Death* *!—What Cause, what adequate Cause, can be assigned for this amazing Anguish? None but the Wrath of his Almighty FATHER. Who was now become an inexorable Judge; treated Him no longer as the Son of his Love, but as the Surety for numberless Millions of guilty Creatures.

Ther. Was it possible, that the innocent and holy JESUS, the dearly beloved SON of GOD, should be an Object of his FATHER's Wrath?

Ass. It was not only possible, but unavoidable and necessary. Unavoidable, with respect to the divine Holiness; necessary, for the Procurement of our Redemption.—Sin was charged upon CHRIST; all the Sins of all Believers, in all Ages and Places of the World. And was it possible, that the infinitely righteous GOD should behold such a Deluge of Iniquities, without expressing his Displeasure? Or could the LORD JESUS be punished, truly punished for them, without any painful Sensation of their horrid Evil, and of that tremendous Indignation which they deserved?

If this was not the Case, who can maintain the Dignity of his Conduct, during the Agony in the Garden?—Was there no pouring out of the divine Displeasure? Then his Behaviour in that Hour of Trial, was not equal to the Intrepidity of the three Hebrew Youths; who continued calm, and without the least Perturbation, while the Furnace was heated into seven-fold Rage †.—But if He was making his Soul an Offering for Sin, it is easy to account for the prodigi-

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* Matt. xxvi. 38. † Dan. iii. 17, 18, 19.

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ous Consternation. It is not to be wondered, that his Heart, though endued with invincible Fortitude, should become like *melting Wax*. For, who knoweth the Power of that Wrath, at which the Pillars of Heaven tremble *?

Ah! *Theron*; the Vinegar and the Gall, which they gave Him to drink, were not half *so bitter*, as the Cup of his FATHER's Wrath. Yet, for our sake, He drank it off to the very Dregs.—The Nails, that pierced his Hands; and the Spear, that cleft his Heart; were not half *so sharp*, as the Frowns of his eternal FATHER's Countenance. Which, for our Consolation, He patiently submitted to bear.—He was rent with Wounds, and racked with Pain; his Bones were dislocated, and his Nerves convulsed; a thousand thorny Daggers were planted in his Temples, and Life flowed out at ten thousand gushing Veins. Yet this, all this was *gentle*, was *lenient*, in comparison of those inexpressible Agonies, which penetrated his *very Soul*. The former, fetched not a single Complaint from his Mouth: the latter, wrung from his breaking Heart that passionate Exclamation; *My GOD! My GOD! why hast Thou forsaken me?*—Astonishing Words! Surely, a *Distress*, beyond all Imagination grievous †, uttered them. Sure-

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ly,

* *Job* xxvi. 11. The Prophet *Nahum* cries out, with Amazement and Terror; *Who can stand before his Indignation? and who can abide in the Piercings of his Anger? His Fury is poured out like Fire, and the Rocks are thrown down before Him.* i. 6.

† To heighten our Idea of this Distress, the Evangelists make use of the *most forcible Words*—*ἐξέτατο ὁ πνεύματος*, He was seized with the *most alarming* Astonishment

ly, the *Vengeance*, not of Men, but of Heaven itself, extorted them. Every Syllable of which speaks, what the mourning Prophet describes; *Is it nothing to You, all Ye that pass by? Behold and see! if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me, in the Day of his fierce Anger *?*

Here, now, is *our whole* Punishment endured; the Shame of the Cross, and the Sorrows of Death; the Suspension of the ALMIGHTY's Favour, and the terrible Sensations of his Wrath.

Ther. Be it so. Yet all this amounts to no more, than Part of Payment. For, these Sufferings were transient; *temporary* only, not *eternal*. Therefore, the main Circumstance, the most bitter Ingredient, was wanting.

Asp.

ment — ἀνυμνω, He was overwhelmed with *insupportable Dejection* — περιδυσσας, He was *besieged* on all Sides, as it were, with an Army of *invading Sorrows* — He *wrestled*, amidst strong Cries and Tears, not only with the Malice of Men, and Rage of Devils, but with the infinitely more dreaded Indignation of GOD: He wrestled even unto an *Agony* of Spirit, ἡ ἀγωνία. All these Circumstances of Horror and Anguish, constitute what a celebrated Poet very justly styles,

A Weight of Woe more than ten Worlds could bear!

The *Critic*, probably, will admire the Propriety and Beauty of this Line. Which, composed of nothing but Monosyllables, and clogged with the frequent Repetition of a cumbrous Consonant, makes the Sound remarkably apposite to the Sense. — May We all be *sacred Critics*! Have, not only a *refined Taste*, to relish such Elegancies of Composition, but an *awakened Heart*, to feel the Energy of such important Truths!

* Lam. i. 12.

Asp. In the *Estimate* of Divine Justice, and in point of penal *Satisfaction*, they were equivalent to our endless Punishment. — Had our LORD's Sufferings been the Sufferings of a mere Man, or of the most exalted Angel, I acknowledge, they could have bore no Proportion to our Demerit. But they were the Sufferings of *the Prince of Life*, and *the LORD of Glory*: before whom all Men are as Dust, and all Angels as Worms. — Let the immense Dignity of the REDEEMER's Person, be weighed against the everlasting Duration of our Punishment, and it will counter-balance, if not preponderate. His Infinitude is surely parallel to their Eternity.

It was *IMMANUEL*, the incarnate GOD, who purchased the Church, and redeemed Sinners, with his own Blood *. The divine Nature of our SAVIOUR communicated its *ennobling* Influences to every Tear He shed, to every Sigh He heaved, and every Pang He felt. This renders his Sufferings a *perfect*, as the last Circumstance We remarked, renders them a *proper* Satisfaction. And though *the Wood of Lebanon was not sufficient to burn, nor all the Beasts thereof sufficient for a Burnt-Offering* †; this Sacrifice fully answers the Exigence of the Case.

Yes, *Theron*, You must give me leave to repeat the delightful Truth; It was *the great GOD, even our Saviour JESUS CHRIST*, who gave Himself for Us ‡. His Sacrifice therefore must be *inconceivably meritorious*. O! that Sinners, the vilest of Sinners, knew its all-sufficient Efficacy! They would no longer be holden in the Bonds of Iniquity, by that

L 3

destruc-

* Acts xx. 28. † Isai. xl. 16. ‡ Tit. ii. 13, 14.

destructive Suggestion of the Devil, *There is no Hope* *.

Ther. What valuable End could such vicarious Suffering accomplish? Suppose GOD absolutely inexorable, and they must be *insufficient*. Suppose Him divinely merciful, and they are *needless*.

Ass. The Difficulty You propose, I think, has been obviated already. So that I have no Occasion to solve your Dilemma, but only to answer your Query. These Sufferings—as a *Punishment*, gave ample Satisfaction to the divine violated Law.—As a *Sacrifice*, they perfectly reconciled Us to our offended GOD—as a *Price*, they redeemed Us from every Evil, and purchased for Us a Title to all Good.

This is a Subject of the most distinguished Importance. Let not my *Theron* imagine, I would abuse his Patience, if I dwell a Moment longer on the favourite Topic.—I might enumerate many Ends, all *magnificent* and *gracious*, accomplished by this wonderful Expedient. I content myself with specifying a few. But those, such as bring the highest *Glory* to GOD—administer the most solid *Comfort* to Man—and most effectually promote the Interests of *Piety*.

In this We have a Manifestation of the most awful Justice, and at the same Time a Display of unbounded Goodness.—*Awful Justice*; in that the great and terrible GOD, though determined to exercise Mercy, would exercise it only in such a Manner, as might vindicate the Authority of his Law; might testify the Purity

* Jer. ii. 25.

Purity of his Nature; and declare the inviolable Faithfulness of his Word. — *Unbounded Goodness*; in that He with-held not his SON, his only SON, but freely gave Him up for Us all. Gave up “the Brightness of his Glory,” to be covered with Infamy; gave up “the beloved of his Soul,” to expire in Agonies; on purpose to obtain Honour and Immortality for apostate Men. — The *Torments* inflicted on all the *Damned* in Hell, are not so fearful a Monument of GOD’s Justice, as those dying Agonies of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Nor could a *thousand Worlds*, conferred on Mankind, have been such an Act of superabundant Munificence, as that Gift of his ever blessed SON.

Look We for *Wisdom*? What an admirable Contrivance of heavenly Wisdom, to harmonize the *seemingly opposite* Claims of Mercy and of Justice! and not only to *satisfy* each, but to *magnify* both! — Had Punishment been executed, in *all its Rigour*, on the Sinner’s Person, Mercy had lost her amiable Honours. Had the Sinner been restored to Favour, without *any Penalties* sustained either by Himself or his Surety, Justice had been set aside as an insignificant Attribute. Whereas, by our LORD’s vicarious and expiatory Sufferings, both are manifested, and both are exalted. — What an admirable Contrivance of heavenly Wisdom! To shew the utmost Abhorrence and Detestation of Sin, even while the Sinner is permitted to go unpunished! Nay, is admitted into the very Arms of infinite Love, and blessed with everlasting Acceptance! GOD hath not only exercised, but *abounded in Wisdom and Prudence* — abounded in *all* Wisdom and Prudence*, by

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this

* Eph. i. 8.

this Instance of marvelous and triumphant Grace. Which is, at once, so honourable to Himself, and so advantageous to his People.

Ther. *Advantageous to his People*—I am glad, You are come to this Point. This is what I want to have cleared up. I am for those Doctrines, which glorify GOD, by doing Good to Man. Give me the Religion, whose Aspect is *benign*, and whose Agency is *beneficial*. Not like a *Meteor*, to dazzle Us with a vain Glitter. Not like a *Comet*, to terrify Us with a formidable Glare. But like yonder *Sun*, whose Beams shed Light, and Life, and Joy all around.

Asp. If this be what You seek, and what You prize; the *Christian* Religion, this Doctrine in particular, will answer your warmest Expectations, and challenge your highest Esteem. For it is rich with Benefits of the most needful, the most desirable, and most exalted Kind.

The first and grand Blessing is *Pardon of Sins*. — Pardon, not of small Sins only, but of the most aggravated, the most horrid, the most enormous. Be they flaming as Scarlet, be they foul as the Dunghil, be they black as Hell itself; yet they shall be as the spotless Wool, or as the Virgin Snows *; they shall be, as though they had never been. — Pardon, not of a few, but of all Sins. Be they numerous as the Stars of Heaven, numerous as the Hairs of our Head, numerous as the Sands upon the Sea-shore, the Blood of JESUS CHRIST cleanseth from them ALL †.

Hereby We have Victory over Death, and Admittance into eternal Life. — For thus saith the holy Apostle,

* *Isai*, i. 18.

† *1 John* i. 7.

postle, concerning the poor Sojourners in Clay; *Seeing therefore the Children were Partakers of Flesh and Blood, He also partook of the same; that by undergoing Death, He might destroy Him who had the Power of Death, that is the Devil; and deliver those, who, through Fear of Death, were all their Life-time subject to Bondage* *. —And thus saith the venerable Elder, concerning the glorified Saints in Light; *These are they, who came out of great Tribulation; and they have washed their Robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb: therefore are they before the Throne* †.

If the *Philistines* rejoiced, when *Samson*, the Destroyer of their Country, was delivered into their Hands; how much greater Reason have We to rejoice, since the blessed *JESUS* has vanquished our last Enemy! Has made Death the Minister of endless Life, and the Grave a Gate to eternal Glory! — If *Joseph* had Cause to be glad, when his Prison-Garments were taken from Him; when He was brought into the Palace of *Pharaoh*; and made to sit at the Right-hand of the King. Is it not an incomparably richer Blessing, to have our Robes washed in redeeming Blood, and our Souls cleansed from all Guilt? Is it not an incomparably higher Advancement, to be admitted into the blissful Presence, and to possess the everlasting Kingdom of GOD?

To comprehend all in a Word — Hereby are procured, even for the most unworthy Creatures, all the Benefits of the New Covenant. Therefore, the Blood of *CHRIST* is styled by a Prophet, *The Blood of thy Covenant* ‡; by an Apostle, *The Blood of the everlasting Covenant* ||; and our LORD himself says,

* Heb. ii. 14, 15. † Rev. vii. 14. ‡ Zech. ix. 11. || Heb. xiii. 20.

says, *This is the new Covenant in my Blood* *.—Is it a Privilege, to know GOD, the infinitely amiable Source of all Perfection? Is it a most valuable Endowment, to have his Laws put into our Minds, and written on our Hearts? Is it a Branch of real Felicity, to have our numberless Sins forgiven, and not one of our Iniquities remembered any more? Is it the Compendium of all Happiness, to have GOD for our Portion, and our exceeding great Reward? To be his peculiar Treasure, his loving and beloved People †.—Of all these We may say, They are the *Purchase* of IMMANUEL's *Blood*: and whoever is truly interested in the *One*, is unquestionably intitled to the *Other*.

Who then would refuse so *comfortable*—

Ther. Too comfortable, I should imagine, to be either *true* in itself, or *safe* in its Consequences. Must it not tend to *embolden* the Sinner in the Prosecution of his Vices? Who need scruple to transgress, or be very solicitous to repent; if an all-atoning Sacrifice has been offered, for every Kind, and every Degree of Wickedness?

Asp. Would You have Sinners *intimidated*? Nothing speaks such Terror to the Children of Disobedience, as the bitter Passion, and accursed Death of *CHRIST*.—All the rhetorical Aggravations of Sin, with regard to its loathsome Nature, and execrable Vileness—all the Severity of Vengeance, executed upon rebellious Angels, or wicked Men—all, all are *weak* and *inexpressive*, compared with the *dreadful Emphasts* of this great Transaction. For, if the *LORD Almighty* spared not *his own SON*, when Guilt

* Luke xxii. 20. The original Word *diathesis* signifies either a *Testament*, or a *Covenant*.

† Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12.

Guilt was, not found in Him, but only imputed to Him; how much less shall He spare *incorrigible* Offenders, who both habitually commit, and obstinately persist in, their daring Impieties?

If, by Repentance, You mean an *ingenious Sorrow* for our Transgressions; nothing is so likely to break the stony, or melt the icy Heart, as these doleful Effects of Sin.—Whose Indignation does not rise against the infamous Wretch, that betrayed his LORD? Who is not ready to detest those envenomed Tongues, that accused Him; and those barbarous Hands, that crucified Him? How then can We choose but lament, and grieve, and mourn, when Conscience bears witness; That *our Sins* were the principal Actors in this deepest of Tragedies? That *We, even We*, by our manifold Crimes, were the *Betrayers and Murderers* of the Prince of Life!—If, by Repentance, You mean a *thorough Renunciation* of all Iniquity; no Motive is so effectual, to divorce the Affections from every abominable Idol, and divert the Feet from every evil Way, as an attentive Consideration of our REDEEMER's Death. With this agrees the Reasoning of the Apostle; *He himself bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree*; not that *We* should be emboldened to repeat them, but induced and enabled to forsake them; that, charmed with such unutterably tender Mercy, We might relinquish our darling Lusts; and, *being dead unto Sin, might live unto Righteousness* *.

If You would have *Benevolence*, your favourite Principle, take place and operate; it is impossible to urge so *endearing* a Persuasive to universal Goodwill,

* 1 Pet. ii. 24.

will, as this *Kindness and Love of GOD our SAVIOUR* *.—How can We indulge the Sallies of Resentment, or harbour the Seeds of Animosity; when the meek, the merciful, the infinitely gracious REDEEMER, laid down his Life for his *bitterest Enemies*? How can We treat with Contempt or Indifference, even the *meanest* of *Mankind*; since our divine Master gave his all-glorious Person, for vile Wretches and miserable Sinners?—Never was there so *winning* a Call to disinterested Charity, as the amiable Example of *CHRIST*. Never so *binding* a Cement of brotherly Love, as the Blood of the crucified *JESUS*.

In short; would You have People possessed of every heavenly Virtue, and animated to the Practice of every good Work? Nothing administers so powerful an Incitement to them all, as a *lively* and *appropriating* Sense of this wondrous Grace. Set home by the *HOLY GHOST* †, it produces such a warm Gratitude in the Heart, as is far more operative, than the most *awful* Threatenings, or the most *cogent* Reasonings.—So that, quite contrary to your Suspicions, the

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Tit. iii. 4.

† The Reader will give me Leave, on this Occasion, to subjoin the noble Doxology of our Church. Which, when thus applied, may be an excellent Means, both of expressing our Gratitude, and of quickening our Devotion.—*Glory be to the FATHER*; for providing this all-sufficient Atonement, and giving his SON to save a ruined World.—*Glory be to the SON*; for humbling Himself to the Death of the Cross, and obtaining eternal Redemption for Sinners.—*Glory be to the HOLY GHOST*; for testifying of *CHRIST* in our Hearts, and appropriating this great Salvation to our Souls.

native Tendency of this excellent Doctrine, is, to suppress Ungodliness, and promote Piety.

Observe, how the present calm Evening, yonder mild declining Sun, and these soft balmy Breezes; have unlocked the flowery Prisons, and detached a *Profusion* of *Odours* through the Air: have inspirited the little Songsters of the Grove, and fetched *lavish Harmony* from their Throats. So sweetly will a true Belief in *JESUS CHRIST* and Him crucified, draw forth all the Powers of the Soul, in Acts of *ready* and *cheerful* Obedience.—He is therefore said, not only to justify, but also to *sanctify the People with his Blood* *.

Let Us consider the Death of *CHRIST*, in this its *full Grandeur* and *extensive Efficacy*; and We shall discern the admirable Propriety of the Apostle's Remark: *It became Him, for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings* †. IT BECAME; as an *Act* of *Sovereignty* in *GOD*, it comported with the Dignity, and emblazoned (if I may so speak) the incomprehensible Majesty of his Perfections.—As an Execution of *impartial Vengeance* on our Surety, it asserted the Rights of divine Government, and secured the utmost Veneration to the divine Law.—As an Emanation of *rich Indulgence* to Us, it redressed all our Misery, and retrieves our whole Happiness. — In *each* Respect, it spreads the brightest Lustre over all the Administrations of the blessed *GOD*; and renders his very Justice, amiable and glorious even to Astonishment.

—In

* Heb. xiii. 12.

† Heb. ii. 10.

—In *all* Respects, it is worthy of the most grateful and adoring Acceptance from sinful Man; and such as will be had in everlasting Honour by the Choirs of Saints, and the Hosts of Angels.

Ther. I thank You, *Aspasio*. Your Arguments have not indeed converted me, but they have strengthened my Faith. I never was so unhappily mistaken, as to disbelieve the Satisfaction made by our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*; made to divine Justice; made for the Sins of the World. But, I now see more clearly its *Reasonableness* and *Importance*; its cheering Aspect on the *guilty* Conscience, and its benign Influence on the *moral* Conduct.

Asp. I congratulate You, dear *Theron*, from my inmost Soul, on your thorough Conviction of this important Truth. May You have still more *extensive* and *generous* Views of the glorious Article! And may every renewed View be more and more influential on your Heart!

Reviving, ravishing Thought! To have HIM for our bleeding *Victim*! HIM for our great *Propitiation*! at whose Feet the Armies of Heaven bow, and the Saints in Light adore!—Reviving, ravishing Thought! To have *all* our Punishment sustained, and the *whole* Curse of the Law exhausted; so that Justice itself can demand no more!—Nay; to have such a *perfect* Ransom paid for our Redemption, as renders it, not *barely* an Act of favourable Indulgence, but of the *highest* Righteousness * also, to pardon, accept, and glorify the Believer!

Excuse

* Therefore the Apostle says, *GOD is faithful and just to forgive Us our Sins*, 1 John i. 9. *Faithful*; because He

Excuse me, *Theron*. My Affections are again upon the Soar. But I clip their Wings.—Only let me ask, Is not this Doctrine the *grand Peculiarity* of the Gospel; by which it stands distinguished from every other Religion, professed in the World?—Is it not the *central Point*, in which all the Lines of Duty unite, and from which all the Rays of Consolation proceed?—Strike this Article from the Creed, and You reduce the “Mystery of Godliness” to a System of Ethics: You degrade the Christian Church into a School of Philosophy.—To deny the Expiation made by our REDEEMER’S Sacrifice, is to obscure the *brightest Manifestation* of divine Benignity, and to undermine the *principal Pillar* of practical Religion; is to make a desperate Shipwreck of our everlasting Interests; and to *dash* (such, I fear, it will be found, in the final Issue of Things) Ourselves to *Death*, on the very *Rock* of *Salvation*.

Ther. Now, I believe, it is Time to repair *Homewards*. And I hope, it will be no disagreeable Exchange, if We resign our Seat on the Mount, for a Place in the Dining-room.

Asp. Pray, let me inquire, as We walk along (for I was unwilling to interrupt our Discourse, merely to gratify

He had promised this Blessing, by the unanimous Voice of all his Prophets.—*Just!* Surely then He will *punish*! No; for this very Reason He will pardon.—This may seem strange: but, upon the evangelical Principles of Atonement and Redemption, it is undoubtedly true. Because, when the Debt is paid, or the Purchase made, it is the Part of *Equity* to cancel the Bond, and consign over the purchased Possession.

gratify my Curiosity) What may be the *Design* of *your* *Edifice*; which rises on a small Eminence, ~~near~~ the public Road? It is neither a Tower, nor a Dwelling-House; but looks like a stately Column, erected on purpose to beautify the Prospect.

Ther. It is a sort of monumental Pile. Erected, as the Story goes, on a very memorable Occasion.—Queen *Eleanor* accompanied King *Edward the First* to (what was called) the Holy War. In which He gained very signal Advantages over the Infidels, and acquired a large Share of Renown to Himself. After many gallant Exploits performed in the Field, a treacherous and desperate *Saracen*, demanding Admittance into his Chamber, under Pretence of private Business, wounded Him with an im-poisoned Dagger. The Consequence of which, his Physicians declared, must be inevitable and speedy Death, unless the Poison was sucked out by some human Mouth. This might possibly preserve the royal Patient, but would be extremely dangerous to the Operator.

Dangerous as it was, his Queen claimed the Office; insisted upon it, as the Consort's Right; and executed it so *faithfully*, that She saved the King's Life, so *happily*, that She lost not her own.—After this, She returned to *England*, lived many Years, and bore several Children. But, sooner or later, Royalty itself must pay the Debt to Nature. Dying, on a Journey to *Scotland*, She was brought back to the last and long Home of our *English* Monarchs *.—Where-ever her Corpse rested, in the Way to its Interment, a Structure

* *Westminster Abbey.*

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ture * (such as You now behold) was raised : In order to perpetuate the *Memory of her conjugal Affection.*

Asp. And should not our Hearts be a *Monument of Gratitude* to the blessed *JESUS*? Who drew the deadly Venom, not from our Veins, but from the *immortal Part* of our Nature : and not at the Hazard, but at the Loss, the *certain and unavoidable Loss* of his precious Life.—He opened his Breast, opened his very Soul, to the *keenest Arrows* of vindictive Justice ; that, transfixing Him, they might drop short of Us. “ The Poison whereof drank up *his Spirits* †,” that the Balm of Peace might refresh *ours*.

O my *Theron* ! Let our *Memories* be the Tablet, to record this unexampled Instance of Compassion and Goodness.—Let our *Affections* dwell upon the tragical, the delightful History ; till they melt into Contrition, and are inflamed with Love.—If We want an *Inscription*, let Us make use of those noble Lines, which, in the finest Climax imaginable, describe the Magnificence and Grace of this astonishing Transaction :

————— Survey the wondrous Cure,
And at each Step let higher Wonder rise.

VOL. I.

M

Pardon

* One of these Structures stands on the high Road, near *Northampton*. It is surrounded with a large Flight of Steps, at the Bottom ; and ornamented, towards the Top, with four female Statues, in full Proportion. A *Latin* Inscription informs the Traveler, concerning its Occasion and Design ;

*In perpetuam Regine Eleanora
Conjugalis Amoris Memoriam.*

† Job vi. 4.

Pardon for infinite Offence!—And Pardon

Through Means that speak its Value infinite!

A Pardon bought with Blood!—With Blood divine!—

With Blood divine of H-I-M, I made my For!—

Persisted to provoke!—Though woo'd and aw'd,

Blest and chastis'd, a flagrant Rebel still!—

Nor I alone! A rebel Universe!

My Species up in Arms!—Not one exempt!—

Yet for the foulest of the Foul, He dies!

• Night-Thoughts, No IV.





DIALOGUE V.



SPASIO having some Letters of Importance to answer, as soon as the Cloth was taken away, retired from Table.—His epistolary Engagements being dispatched, he inquired for *The-ron*. The Servants informed Him, that their Master walked into the Garden.—A very little Search found Him, seated on an airy Mount, and sheltered by an *elegant Arbour*.

Strong and substantial Plants of *Liburnum* formed the Shell; while the slender and flexile Shoots of *Syringa* filled up the Interstices.—Was it to *compliment*, as well as to *accommodate* their worthy Guests, that they interwove the luxuriant Foliage? Was it to represent those tender but close Attachments, which had *united* their Affections, and *blended* their Interests? —I will not too positively ascribe such a Design to the Disposition of the Branches. They composed, however, by their twining Embraces, no inexpressive

Emblem, both of the *Endearments* and the *Advantages* of Friendship. They composed a Canopy, of the freshest Verdure, and of the thickest Texture. So thick, that it intirely excluded the sultry Ray; and shed both a cool Refreshment, and an amusive Gloom: while every unsheltered Tract, glared with Light, or fainted with Heat.

You enter by an easy Ascent of Steps, lined with Turf, and fenced with a Balustrade of sloping Bay-Trees. — The Roof was a fine *Concave*, peculiarly elevated and stately. Not embossed with Sculpture; not mantled over with Fret-work; not encrusted with splendid Fresco; but far more delicately adorned with the Syringa's *silver Tufts*, and the Liburnum's *flowering Gold*. Whose large and lovely Clusters, gracefully pendent from the leafy Dome; disclosing their Sweets to the delighted Bee; and gently waving to the balmy Breath of Spring; gave the utmost Enrichment to the charming Bower.

Facing the Entrance, lay a spacious grassy Walk; terminated by an octangular *Bason*, with a curious *Fet d'Eau* playing in the Center. The Waters, spinning from the lower Orifices, were attenuated into innumerable little Threads; which dispersed themselves in an horizontal Direction, and returned to the Reservoir in a drizzling Shower. Those, which issued from the higher Tubes, and larger Apertures, either sprung perpendicularly, or spouted obliquely; and formed, as they fell, several lofty Arches of liquid Crystal; all *glittering* on the Eye, and *cooling* to the Air.

Parallel to the Walk ran a *Parterre*; planted with an Assemblage of Flowers, that advanced, one above

another

another, in regular Gradations of Height, of Dignity, and of Beauty.—First, a Row of *Daisies*; gay as the Smile of Youth, and fair as the Virgin-Snows.—Next, a Range of *Crocuses*; like a long Stripe of yellow Sattin, quilted with Threads, or diversified with Sprigs of Green.—A superior Order of *Ranunculuses*, each resembling the Cap of an Earl's Coronet, replenished the third Story with full-blown Tufts of glossy Scarlet.—Beyond this, a more elevated Line of *Tulips**, raised their flourished Heads,

M 3

and

* Here is, it must be confessed, some little Deviation from the general Laws of the Season; some *Anachronism* in the Annals of the Parterre. The Flowers united in this Representation, do not, according to the usual Process of Nature, make their Appearance together. However, as by the Oeconomy of a skilful Gardener, they may be thus associated; I hope, the Possibility of the Thing, will screen my flowery Productions from the Blasts of Censure!—Or, may I not shelter my blooming Assembly, under the Remark of a masterly Critic? Which is as *pertinent* to the Case, as if it had been written on purpose for our Vindication; and so perfectly *elegant*, that it must adorn every Work, which quotes it, and delight every Person, who reads it.

“A Painter of Nature is not obliged to attend Her in her slow Advances, which she makes from one Season to another; or to observe her Conduct in the successive Production of Plants and Flowers. He may draw into his Description all the Beauties of the Spring and Autumn; and make the whole Year contribute something to render it more agreeable. His Roses, Trees, Woodbines, and Jessamines may flourish together; and his Beds be covered at the same Time with Lilies, Violets, and Amaranthus. His Soil is not restrained to any particular Set of Plants, but is proper either for Oaks or Myrtles, and adapts itself to the Product of every Climate.—Oranges may grow wild

“ in

and opened their enameled Cups; not bedecked with a single Tint only, but glowing with an intermingled Variety of almost every radiant Hue. — Above all arose, that noble Ornament of a royal Escutcheon, the *Flower-de-Luce*; bright with ethereal Blue, and grand with imperial Purple. Which formed, by its graceful Projections, a Cornish or a Capital of more than *Corinthian* Richness; and imparted the most consummate Beauty to the blooming Colonade.

The Whole, viewed from the Arbour, looked like a *Rainbow*, painted upon the Ground. And wanted nothing to rival that resplendent Arch, only the Boldness of its Sweep, and the Advantage of its ornamental Curve.

To this agreeable Recess *Theron* had withdrawn Himself. Here He sat musing and thoughtful; with his Eye fixed upon a Cut, representing some magnificent Ruins. — Wholly intent upon his Speculation.

He
 “in it; Myrrh may be met with in every Hedge; and
 “if He thinks it proper to have a Grove of Spices, He
 “can quickly command Sun enough to raise it. His
 “Concerts of Birds may be as full harmonious, and his
 “Woods as thick and gloomy, as He pleases. He is
 “at no more Expence in a long Vista, than a short one;
 “and can as easily throw his Cascades from a Precipice
 “of half a Mile high, as from one of twenty Yards.
 “He has his Choice of the Winds, and can turn the
 “Course of his Rivers, in all the Variety of *Meeanders*,
 “that are most delightful to the Reader’s Imagination.
 “In a Word; He has the Modelling of Nature in his
 “own Hands, and may give Her what Charms He
 “pleases, provided He does not reform her too much,
 “and run into Absurdities by endeavouring to excel.”

He never perceived the Approach of *Assasio*; till He had reached the Summit of the Mount, and was ready to take a Seat by his Side.

Ass. Lost, *Theron*! quite lost in Thought! And unaffected with all these amiable Objects; insensible amidst this Profusion of Beauties; which, from every Quarter, make their Court to your Senses!—Methinks, the snarling *Steie* in his Tub, could hardly put on a greater Severity of Aspect, than my polite Philosopher in his blooming *Eden*.

Ther. Ah! my dear Friend, these flowery Toys which embellish the Garden, are familiar to my Eye, and therefore cheap in my Esteem. I behold them frequently; and, for that Reason, feel but Little of the pleasing Surprise, which they may possibly awaken in a Stranger.—Something like this We all experience, with regard to Events infinitely more worthy our admiring Notice. Else, why are We not struck with a Mixture of Amazement, Veneration, and Gratitude, at the grand machinery and magnificent Productions of Nature?

That the Hand of the ALMIGHTY should wheel round the vast terrestrial Globe, with such prodigious *Rapidity*, and exact *Punctuality*; on purpose to produce the regular Vicissitudes of Day and Night; on purpose to bring on the orderly Succession of Seed-Time and Harvest!—We wonder, when We read of the *Israelites*, sojourning forty Years in the Desert, marching backwards and forwards over its burning Sands; and find neither their Clothes waxing old* by so long a Use, nor their Feet swelling† with such painful Journeys. Yet we feel no grateful Surprise, when We enjoy the Benefits of the Air, which clothes the

M 4

Earth

* Deut. viii. 4.

† Neh. ix. 21.

Earth as it were with a Garment; and has neither contracted any *noxious* Taint, through the extensive Revolution of almost six thousand Years; nor suffered any *Diminution* of its natural Force, though exercised in a Series of unremitted Activity, ever since the elementary Operations began.

This Draught in my Hand, shews Us the *Instability* of the grandest, *most laboured* Monuments of human Art. They are soon swept away, among the other feeble Attempts of Mortality: Or remain only, as You see Here, in shattered Ruins; Memorials of the vain and powerless Ambition of the Builders. — How strange then, that a Structure, incomparably more tender and delicate, should be preserved to *old Age*, and *hoary Hairs*! That the bodily Machine, which is so exquisite in its Frame, so complicated in its Parts, and performs so many Thousands * of Motions every Moment, should continue *unimpaired*, yet act without Intermission, so many Days, and Weeks, and Months, and Years. — How strange

* *Thousands* — Not to mention the *spontaneous*, if We consider only the *mechanical* Motions, which are continually performed in the animal System — the digestive Action of the Stomach — the vermicular Agitation of the Bowels — the Progress of the Chyle through the lacteal Vessels — the many, many Operations of the secreting Glands — the Compression of the Lungs and all their little cellular Lodgments, by every Act of Respiration — above all, that grand Impetus, the Systole of the Heart, which, by every Constriction, darts the crimson Current through an innumerable Multitude of Arteries; and drives, at the same Instant of Time, the resluent Blood through an innumerable Multitude of corresponding Veins — Such a View will oblige Us to acknowledge, that this Account is far from being extravagant: that it rather *diminishes*, than *exaggerates* the real Fact.

all this! Yet, because common, how seldom does it excite our Praise, or so much as engage our Notice.

Ass. Your Remarks are as just, as the Neglect of them is customary. — Unaccountable Supineness! Though GOD doeth great Things, worthy of all Observation; yea, and Wonders without Number: We yawn with Indolence, instead of being animated with Devotion, or transported with Delight. Lo! He goeth before Us in evident Manifestations of Wisdom and Power; yet, We see Him not: He passeth on also, and scatters unnumbered Blessings from his providential Hand; but We perceive Him not.*

This, though greatly culpable, is to be reckoned among the *smallest* Instances of our ungrateful Insensibility. — Are We not inattentive even to the Work of Redemption? That Work, which, according to the emphatical Declaration of Scripture, *exceeds in Glory*†: is by far the noblest, the most marvelous of all *sublunary*, perhaps of all *divine*, Transactions. — Are We not shamefully unaffected, even with the Appearance of GOD in human Flesh? Though the King of Kings vouchsafes to exchange his Throne, for the Humiliation of a Servant, and the Death of a Malefactor: though He is pleased, by the Imputation of his active as well as passive Obedience, to become *The LORD our Righteousness*, ye: —

Ther. You are taking an effectual Way, *Assaph*, to rouse me from my Reverie, and make me indeed like the snarling Philosopher. *Imputed Righteousness is a Scheme grossly frivolous and absurd; utterly insufficient to answer the End proposed; and, One would think,*

* Job ix. 10, 11. † 2 Cor. iii. 9.

could never be depended on, where there is the least Degree of Understanding, and Capacity for Reasoning *.

Asp. Who is warm now, Theron? May I not remind my Friend, that the *Resentful* is no more fitted

* The Reader will probably be disgusted, at this Heat of Temper, this *Asperity* of Diction, and both so abruptly introduced.—I have no Apology to make for my Theron. The Reader has Reason to be disgusted; has Reason to be chagrined. Only let me desire Him to remember, That this is the very Spirit, nay these are the very Words, of a celebrated Opposer of our Doctrine; not added, when He has fully proved the Absurdity of the Scheme; but assumed, even upon the very Entrance to his Discourse.

I have often wondered, that Disputants, especially on religious Subjects, should choose to deal in such *acrimonious* and *reproachful* Language. Does the *Wrath of Man* work the *Righteousness of GOD*? Or, is a passionate Investive the proper Means, either to conciliate our Affections, or convince our Judgment?—Why should We not write in the same genteel and obliging Strain, in which We converse? Were We to meet our Antagonist in a Friend's Parlour, and have a personal Conference on the Subject, our Speech would be kind, and our Remonstrances calm;—"I am sorry, Sir, that You have espoused such Notions. They seem to me, extremely wrong, and equally dangerous. I am apt to think, You have not duly considered, either the little Ground, they have to support them; or the pernicious Consequences, that may attend them."

Why should not our Controversies from the Press be carried on, with such a *candid* and *amicable* Strife? This would certainly render them, more pleasing to the Reader; more profitable to the Public; and much more likely to have their desired Effect upon our Opponent.—For my part, I admire the Humanity and Tenderness of the Poet's Resolution; even more than the Boldness of his Figures, or the Beauty of his Expression:

Tu Lapides loqueris, ego byssina Verba reponam.

to work Conviction, than the *Rapturous*?—Perhaps, You have not duly considered this Subject; nor seen it in the proper Point of View. I have sometimes beheld a Ship of War, several Leagues off at Sea. It seemed to be a *dim cloudy* Something, hovering on the Skirts of the Horizon; contemptibly mean, and not worthy of a Moment's Regard.—But, as the floating Citadel approached, the Masts arose; the Sails swelled out; its stately Form, and curious Proportions struck the Sight. It was no longer a shapeless Mass, or a Blot in the Prospect, but the *Master-Piece* of human Contrivance, and the *noblest Spectacle* in the World of Art. The Eye is never weary of viewing its Structure, nor the Mind in contemplating its Uses.

Who knows, *Theron*, but this sacred Scheme likewise, which You now look upon as a *confused Heap* of Errors, may very much improve, when more closely examined. May, at length, become a wise and benign Plan; admirably fitted to the Condition of our fallen Nature, and perfectly worthy of all Acceptation.

Ther. I know not what may happen, *Aspasio*. But there seems to be very little Probability of such a Change. For, though my last Opposition was a *mock Fight*: in my present Objections I am *very sincere*, and to this Doctrine I am a *real Enemy*.—The Notion of a substituted and vicarious Righteousness is absurd even to common Sense, and to the most natural and easy Reflections of Men.

Asp. It may not, my dear Friend, agree with our natural Apprehensions; nor fall in with the Plan, which *We* might have devised, for the Salvation of Man-

Mankind. But this is the Voice of Scripture, and a Maxim never to be forgotten; *GOD's Thoughts are not as our Thoughts, nor his Ways as our Ways* *. — His Righteousness is like the strong Mountains, and his Judgments are like the great Deep †: the former immoveable, the latter unsearchable.

Ther. The Mention of Mountains, puts me in Mind of what I was reading Yesterday — the keen Irony, with which *Abimelech's* principal Officer chastised the blustering *Gaal*: *Thou see'st the Shadow of the Mountains, as if they were Men* ‡. He, it is sarcastically intimated, was afraid, and my *Aspasio* seems to be fond of Shadows.

Asp. Happy for your *Aspasio*, that Irony is no Argument. If a Jury was impanelled, to try me and my Doctrine, I should certainly *except against Irony*. Generally speaking, He is neither a good Man, nor a true. And, if I remember right, You Yourself consented to set Him aside in this Debate. I shall therefore adapt my Reply, rather to what is solid, than what is smart.

This Notion, You say, is absurd to common Sense — A Saying, upon which I must beg Leave to put a Query. It was, I own, absolutely beyond the Power of common Sense, unassisted by divine Revelation, to discover this Truth. — I will grant farther, That this Blessing infinitely transcends, whatever common Sense has observed, in all her Converse with finite Things — But, if I have any the least Acquaintance with common Sense, I am very sure, She will not, She cannot pronounce it an Absurdity. To this Judge I refer the Cause,

And

* *Isai. lv. 8.* † *Psal. xxxvi. 6.* ‡ *Judg. ix. 36.*

And to *open* the Cause a little, let me just observe, That GOD imputed our Sins to his SON. How else could the immaculate *JESUS* be punished, as the most inexcusable Transgressor? *Awake O Sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow, saith the LORD of Hosts* *. Is not this the Voice of a Judge, pronouncing the Sentence, and authorizing the Execution? Or rather, does it not describe the Action of Justice, turning the Sword from Us, and sheathing it in *CHRIST*? Who, if He was our Substitute with regard to *penal Suffering*, why may He not stand in the same Relation, with regard to *justifying Obedience*? There is the same Reason for the one, as for the other. Every Argument in favour of the former, is equally conclusive in behalf of the latter.

Ther. I very freely grant, that *CHRIST JESUS* was punished in *our Stead*; that his Death is the Expiation of *our Sin*, and the Cause of our Security from penal Suffering. But this—

Asp. Will undeniably prove, that Sin was imputed to Him; otherwise He could not truly suffer in our Stead, nor be justly punished at all. “And Imputation is as reasonable and justifiable in *one Case*, as in the *other*; for they both stand upon one and the same Foot; and for that Reason, He who throws down one, throws down both.”—I should not have interrupted my *Theron*, only to introduce this Answer from an eminent Divine. Who adds, what should be very seriously considered; “And therefore, whoever rejects the Doctrine of the Imputation of our SAVIOUR’s *Righteousness* to
“Man,

“ Man, does, by so doing, reject the Imputation of
 “ Man’s Sin to our SAVIOUR, and all the
 “ Consequences of it. Or, in other Words, He
 “ who rejects the Doctrine of the *Imputation*, does,
 “ by so doing, reject the Doctrine of the *Expiation*
 “ likewise *.”

Ther. I know nothing of this Divine; and, eminent as He is, can hardly take his *Ipse dixit* for a Decision.

Asp. I was in hopes, You would pay the greater Regard to *his* Opinion, because He is not in the Number of the whimsical Fanatics.

Give me Leave to observe farther, That the Imputation of *CHRIST*’s Righteousness, bears an evident Analogy to another great Truth of *Christianity*. We did not personally commit *Adam*’s Sin, yet are We chargeable with Guilt, and liable to Condemnation, on that —

Ther. How! *We* chargeable with Guilt, and liable to Condemnation, on Account of *Adam*’s Transgression! This Position I must deny; I had almost said, I must abhor. None other could, in the Eye of Justice and Equity, be blameable for any Offence of our first Parents, but *they only*.

Asp. So says *Theron*, but what says *St. Paul*? This may be the Voice of *natural Reason*, but what is the Language of *divine Revelation*? *In whom, that is in Adam, all have sinned.*

Ther.

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Ther. The Words, if I remember right, are *For that all have sinned.*

Asp. In the Margin, they are translated, as I have repeated them. For this Interpretation I might contend, as not in the least incompatible which the original Phrase*, and as the most precisely suitable to the sacred Argument. But I waive this Advantage. Let the Words run into your Mould; and the Translation take your Form. They are equally decisive of the Point in Debate. — They assign the Reason, why Death came upon all Men; Infants themselves not excepted: *For that all have sinned.* How? Not in their own Person; this was utterly impossible. But in that first grand Transgression of their federal Head. Which, as it could not be actually committed by them, must, according to the Tenour of the Apostles Arguing, be imputed to them.

Ther. Pray, what do You mean by that crude, and to me unintelligible Phrase, *federal Head.*

Asp. I mean what the Apostle teaches, when He calls *CHRIST the second Man†, and the last Adam‡.* — The second! The last! How? Not in a numerical Sense. Not in Order of Time. But in this Respect — That, as *Adam* was a public Person, and acted in the Stead of all Mankind; so *CHRIST* was a public Person, and acted in Behalf of all his People — That, as *Adam* was the first general Representative of this Kind, *CHRIST* was the second and

* Εφ' ὡ πάντες ἥμαρτον. Rom. v. 12. Not to mention the famous Distinction of *Epictetus*, ἢ εφ' ἑμῶν, nor the well-known Adagy of *Hesiod*, παντὶ δ' ἐνὶ κοινῷ αἰσιν. See Chap. iv. 18. v. 2. of this very Epistle. Where the Preposition ἐν is used in *Assafio's* Sense.

† 1 Cor. xv. 47.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 45.

and the *last*: there never was, and there never will be, any other — That, what they severally did, in this Capacity, was not intended to *terminate* in themselves, but to *affect* as many as they respectively represented. — This is St. Paul's Meaning, and this is the Foundation of the Doctrine of Imputation.

Ther. If You build it on no other Foundation, than *your own* particular Sense of the Apostle's Words, perhaps, it may prove a sandy and unstable Ground.

Asp. I build it upon mine, and I deduce it from yours, *Theron*. — But I am far from resting the whole Weight of the Cause, upon a *single* Text. It is established, again and again, in this same Chapter. — Neither do I wonder at the Prejudices, which You and Others may entertain against the Doctrine. It lies quite out of the Road of Reason's Researches: it is among the *wonderful Things of GOD's Law*. This the inspired Penman foresaw, and modelled his Discourse accordingly. Like some *skilful Engineer*, who, though He makes the whole Compass of his Fortification strong, yet bestows *peculiar* and *additional* Strength on those Parts, which He apprehends will be exposed to the fiercest Attack. So the wise, the divinely wise Apostle, has inculcated, and re-inculcated, this momentous Point: has enforced it with all the Assiduity of Zeal, and confirmed it by all the Energy of Expression. — *If through the Offence of One, many be dead — The Judgment was by One to Condemnation — By one Man's Offence Death reigned by One — By the Offence of One, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation* *. — That there may remain no Possibility, of mistaking his Meaning, or of elud-

ing

* Rom. v. 15, 16, 17, 18.

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ing his Argument, He adds, *By ONE Man's Disobedience MANY were made Sinners* *.

Ther. Sin, I am told by a celebrated Expositor, sometimes signifies *Punishment*. He farther informs me, that We may be said to sin in *Adam*, not by the Imputation of his Disobedience to Us, but by becoming obnoxious to those Sufferings which were due to his Sin.

Asp. Then the Apostle's Reasoning will stand in this Form; *Death came upon all Men, for that all have sinned*; that is, Suffering came upon all Men, because, all have suffered. A goodly Strain of Argumentation for an unerring Writer to use!—But surely *Gamaliel's* Pupil would disclaim, much more would *CHRIST's* Ambassador scorn, such weak and unmeaning Chicanery. He mentions Sin and its Punishment; but never hints, that they are intended to signify *one* and the *same* Thing. He all along maintains a *Distinction* between them; represents the former, as the Cause of the latter. *Judgment, Condemnation, Death* are owing to *Sin, Offence, Disobedience*. It is by the Imputation of *these*, that We become obnoxious to *those*.—This Account clears up the Equity of that providential Government, which executes the Sentence of Death, even on those Descendents of *Adam*, who have not *sinned* in their own Persons. It also illustrates the Procedure of that sovereign Grace, which treats as righteous, and entitles to Life, even those Believers in *JESUS*, who have not *obeyed* in their own Persons.—What says our Church? You have a great Veneration for the *Church of England, Theron*.

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N

Ther.

* Rom. v. 19.

Ther. I have. But I fear, my *Aspasio* has neither so honourable an Opinion of her Worship, nor so steady an Adherence to her Constitution. Otherwise, He would not so highly extol those *ambitious* and *canting* Hypocrites the *Puritans*. Who were the most inveterate Enemies of our excellent Establishment, and would have rejoiced in its utter Subversion.

Asp. As to the *Puritans*, You will do me the Justice to acknowledge, that I speak only of their *evangelical* Tenets, abstracted from all *political* Principles. — As to *myself*, your Fears are friendly, but I trust they are *groundless*. I would only ask; Who are to be deemed the most affectionate and faithful Sons of their sacred Mother? — Those, I presume, who most *cordially embrace* her Doctrines, and most *dutifully submit* to her Precepts. By this Touchstone let my Fidelity be tried. And for an immediate Tryal, be pleased to repeat her Ninth Article.

Ther. I cannot say, that I remember the particular Words of any, though I have often read, and very much approve them all.

Asp. I wish, You would commit to your Memory, four or five of the most distinguished *. They are a valuable Treasure, and contain the Quintessence of the Gospel.

These are the Words of the Ninth Article. “Original Sin is the Fault and Corruption of every Man, that naturally is engendered of the Offspring of *Adam*.” It is the *Fault*, says the pious Bishop *Beveridge*, and therefore We are guilty of it. It is the *Corruption* also, and therefore We are defiled with

* Especially, Article IX, X, XI, XII, XIII.

with it. — Our Homilies have recourse to no such Palliatives, and qualifying Interpretations, as my *Theron's* Expositor uses. One of them affirms point-blank, that “in *Adam* all Men sinned universally.” This seems to be a Paraphrase on the Text, whose Translation You lately controverted.—In what Sense our great *poetical Divine* understood the sacred Writer, is apparent from the following Words; which are supposed to have been spoken by *JEHOVAH* himself;

————— *Adam's Crime*
Makes guilty all his Sons *.

And from another Passage, where our rebellious Progenitor, bewailing his aggravated Misery, and the extensive Malignity of his Sin, declares,

————— *In me all*
Posterity stands curs'd †.

For my own Part I must confess, That, if the Transmission of original Depravity be granted, I know not how the Imputation of *Adam's* destructive Apostacy can be denied. If We had no Concern in the one, how could We be justly punished with the other? — I say *punished*. For, to lose the primitive Integrity of our Nature, and inherit a depraved Disposition, is at once a most deplorable Calamity, and a most terrible Punishment. — Corruption transmitted, and Guilt imputed, seem to be Doctrines *indissolubly* connected. To allow the former, and reject the latter, is, in my Apprehension, to acknowledge the *Effect* without admitting the *Cause*.

N 2

Ther.

* Milton, B. III. 290. † B. X. 817.

Ther. To make Us Parties in a Covenant, which We did not agree to, can this be *equitable*? To ruin Us for a Crime, which We never committed, can this be *merciful*? Surely, this is a flagrant Injustice, never to be ascribed to the all-gracious GOD. A diabolical Barbarity, add Some, never to be mentioned without the utmost Detestation.

Ass. I see no Cause for such a tragical Outcry of Barbarity, nor indeed for any Complaint of Injustice. Not to insist upon the Sovereignty of an all-creating GOD, and his unquestionable Right to *do what He will with his own*. I would only ask — Did He not condescend to transact with Man, not on the Foot of absolute uncontrollable *Authority*, but in the honourable and delightful Way of a *Covenant*? — Were not the *Terms* of this Covenant, perfectly easy, and wonderfully gracious? *Wonderfully gracious*: For, they proposed a State of inconceivable and everlasting Felicity * to Creatures, who were intitled to *no* Happiness; had not the least Claim to *any* Good; no, not so much as to the Privilege of *Existence*. *Perfectly easy*: For, what was the Condition on Man's Part? Not any rigorous Act of Duty, nor severe Course of Self-denial, but the free Enjoyment of *Millions* of Blessings and Pleasures, with only the Prohibition of *one* pernicious Indulgence. — Here then is made, on one hand, a Promise of the most *glorious* Reward, that GOD himself could give: and nothing required, on the other, but the *smallest* Expression of Allegiance, that Man himself could wish. — And is this Injustice? Is this Barbarity?

Ther.

* Luke x. 28.

Ther. All this was equitable enough with regard to Adam: but why should *We* be condemned for his Violation of the Covenant? — Or how was such a Constitution of Things gracious, with respect to *Us*?

Asp. *Why condemned?* Because, *We* should have been Partakers of the Benefit and the Glory, if *He* had persevered in his Duty. To this, I presume, None would object. And if they would not to the one, they ought not to the other.

You ask farther; *How was such a Constitution of Things gracious, with respect to Us?* I answer; Because it was the *most likely* Means, to secure the Happiness of *Us* and all Mankind. Was not *Adam*, of all other Persons, by far the best qualified to act as a general Head? He had a Perfection of Knowledge, to discern his true Interest: a Perfection of Holiness, to capacitate Him for Obedience: and a Perfection of Happiness, disposing Him to Perseverance. As None could have *more eminent* Qualifications, None could have *so many* Obligations. His own eternal Welfare was at stake: the Salvation of his Family, of his Country, of the World, was depending: the Lives, the Souls, the *everlasting All* of the whole human Race, were embarked on the single Bottom of his Fidelity. Therefore, the Felicity of every Individual, that should spring from his Loins, was a fresh Motive to Vigilance, an additional Engagement to Duty*. — As *his* Love to his Offspring was

N 3

* Should any Person imagine Himself more capable of standing than *Adam*, who was endowed with all the Perfections of an innocent, holy, godlike Nature; I think, by this very Imagination, He begins to *fall*; fall into Pride. — Should any Person suppose, That, from a

View

more refined, more exalted, more godlike than ours, all these Considerations and Inducements must operate upon Him, in their fullest Scope, and with the strongest Energy.—What an Entrenchment was here, to keep out Disobedience, and ward off Ruin! An Entrenchment, *deep* as Hell; *high* as Heaven; *wide* as the whole Extent of the human Species.

Here then I may venture to throw the Gauntlet, and challenge the whole World. Let the most penetrating Mind devise a Scheme, so wisely and graciously calculated to *ascertain* the Success of a *probationary* State. If this be impracticable, then must every Mouth be stopped: No Tongue can have the least Reason to complain: I, for my Part, shall think myself obliged to admire the Benignity of my CREATOR's Conduct: and GOD may justly demand of all intelligent Creatures, *What could have been done more for the Salvation of Mankind, that I have not done**.

Especially, when to all this We add, That the same ALMIGHTY Being, who appointed *Adam* to be our Representative in the first Covenant, without asking our *actual Consent*; appointed also *CHRIST* to be our Representative in the second Covenant, without staying for our *actual Solicitation*. When We take *this* into the Account, there remains

View to his own particular Salvation, He would have been faithful; when *Adam* was not engaged to Fidelity, from a Regard to his own and the Salvation of all his Posterity; He seems to be just as wise as the Mariner, who persuades Himself, That, though a *thousand* Anchors could not secure the Ship in a Storm, yet *one* might have done it effectually.

remains not the least Shadow of Injustice ; but Goodness, transcendent Goodness, shines forth with the brightest Lustre.

Ther. Goodness, *Aspasia* ! This is surprising indeed. Why, if *Adam's* Transgression be laid to our Charge, We are *damnable* Creatures, the very Moment We exist ; and are liable to the Torments of Hell, even on Account of *his* Disobedience. To term this Goodness, is the greatest of Paradoxes ! To affirm it of the DEITY, is little less than Blasphemy !

Asp. Let Us be calm, my dear Friend, and consider the Case impartially. If it is not a real Truth, I shall be as willing to relinquish it, as Yourself.

Is not Death, eternal Death, the Wages of every Sin ? And if of every Sin, then doubtless of *original* Sin. Which is the *Fountain*, from whence all the Streams of actual Iniquity flow ; or rather the *Abyss*, from whence all the Torrents pour. — That, which could not be pardoned, but by the Humiliation and Agonies of GOD's adorable SON, may reasonably be supposed to deserve the most dreadful Vengeance. And it is affirmed, by an Authority which You will not dispute, that “ For “ original as well as actual Sin, the Offering of “ *CHRIST* is a Propitiation and Satisfaction *.”

Does not *St. Paul* deliver it, as a Maxim in Divinity ? That, *by the Offence of One*, Adam He undoubtedly means, *Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation* †. The Import of the Words, together with the Connection of the Passage, lead Us to understand this of a Condemnation to *eternal* Misery. — *The Im-*

N 4

port

* Article XXXI.

† Rom. v. 18.

port of the Words: for, they are doubled *, to make them peculiarly strong in their Signification: and each Word, within the Compass of this very Epistle, is used in that awful Latitude of Meaning †. *The Connection of the Passage*: because, it stands opposed to that Justification which is unto Life. This, We are sure, includes the Idea of an everlasting Duration. And why should its tremendous Counterpart be less extensive?

This Sense is evidently patronized, and this Doctrine most peremptorily asserted, by our established Church. What says the Book of Homilies, when treating of the Miseries consequent upon the Fall? “This so great and miserable a Plague, if it had only rested on Adam, who first offended, it had been much easier, and might the better have been borne. But it fell not only on Him, but also on his Posterity and Children for ever; so that the whole Brood of Adam’s Race should sustain the self-same Fall and Punishment, which their Fore-father by his Offence most justly had deserved ‡.”—Lest any should misapprehend the Design of our Reformers, and suppose the Punishment to consist only of some bodily Suffering, or the Loss of Immortality, it is added in the same alarming Discourse; “Neither Adam, nor any of his, had any Right or Interest at all in the Kingdom of Heaven; but were become plain Reprobates and Castaways, being perpetually damned to the everlasting Pains of Hell.”

Lest

* Κεφα. ης το κατακρυφα.

† Rom. ii. 3. iii. 8. viii. 1.

‡ Homily on the Nativity of CHRIST.

—Lest You should imagine, this might be written under a Sally of *hasty* Zeal, or that it is to be reckoned among the *doting* Opinions of a credulous Antiquity; let me remind my Friend, That it is engrafted into the *Articles*. Those Articles, which were agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both Provinces; were consented to by the whole Clergy; and are, to *this Day*, the *national Standard* of our Belief. The Ninth Article, beginning with a Description of our depraved Nature, subjoins an Account of its proper Desert; “In every Person born into the World, it deserveth GOD’s Wrath and Damnation*.”

Ther. How *miserable* then is Man!

Asp. In *Himself* He is miserable beyond Expression. But a *Conviction* of this Misery is the Beginning of all Happiness. *The Valley of Achor is a Door of Hope†.*

Ther. Explain Yourself, *Aspasio*. You seem to deal very much in the Incomprehensibles.

Asp.

* I am surpris’d to see a learned Author, attempting to *sheath* the *Sting* of this awful Denunciation; attempting to prove, that the Words “do not signify GOD’s eternal Wrath, and the Damnation of Hell.”—I shall take no Pains to confute, what He is pleas’d to advance. I leave the Question in the Reader’s own Breast. Let Him discover, if He can, a different Meaning in the Sentence. Unless He has a pretty shrewd Knack at *Sophistry*, I am persuas’d, He will find it a difficult Matter to give *any other* tolerable Turn to the Passage.—Surely, it must be a great Reproach to our venerable Mother, if She delivers her Doctrine in Language so *fallacious*, as must necessarily mislead the Generality of her Sons; or in Terms so *abstruse*, as even a good Understanding cannot develop, without some Proficiency in critical Legerdemain.

† Hof. ii. 15. *Achor* signifies *Trouble*.

Asp. Such a Conviction would demonstrate the *absolute Insufficiency* of all human Attainments, and all human Endeavours, to procure Life and Salvation.— For, in case We could perform every Jot and Tittle of the divine Law; offend in no Instance; fall short in no Degree; persevere to the very End; yet this would be no more than our present bounden Duty. Not the least Pittance of Merit could arise from all this. Much less could this be sufficient to expiate original Guilt, or remove the dreadful Entail of the primitive all-destroying Sin.

This, therefore, would most effectually preclude every false Confidence; and *sweep away*, at one Stroke, *every Refuge of Lies* *. It would lay Us under an immediate, a most indispensable, and a *happy Necessity*, of betaking Ourselves to *CHRIST*.—I say *happy Necessity*; because then We should know, by Experience, what each Part of our LORD's awful yet tender Declaration meaneth; *O Israel! Thou hast destroyed thyself; but in ME is thy Help* † — We should then find, that as Sin and Misery have *abounded* through the first *Adam*, Mercy and Grace have *much more abounded* through the second. For, if We were ruined by a Crime which We committed not, We are recovered by a Righteousness which We performed not. A Righteousness, *infinitely surpassing* whatever We could have acquired; even though our Nature had been transmitted to Us, free from any Depravity, and exempt from all Guilt.

Ther. In your Opinion then, and according to your Scheme, *Salve* and a *Regimen* are better than a *good Constitution*.

Asp.

* *Isai.* xxviii. 17.

† *Hos.* xiii. 9.

Ass. No, *Theron*. My Opinion is, that none can think Himself aggrieved, or have any Reason to complain, at that grand and beneficent Regulation, which suffers the *sickly* Taper to be obscured or extinguished, but sheds abroad the *boundless* and *majestic* Beams of Day. And if any Comparison be made between the most perfect human Obedience, and the everlasting divine Righteousness of *CHRIST*, it should be taken from the glimmering Taper and the meridian Sun.

Ther. I cannot persuade myself to admire such *mysterious* and *unaccountable* Notions. They must puzzle Some: will offend Others: but cannot edify Any.

Ass. This Point, That *We all died in Adam*; were undone by his Apostacy; cannot puzzle the simplest, if unprejudiced Mind.—Nor will it offend Any, but the proud Philosopher, or the self-righteous Moralist.—And I assure You, I should not mention it, much less insist upon it, did it not subserve, and in a very singular Manner, the Purposes of *Edification*. The Doctrine of a REDEEMER, obeying and dying in our Stead, is the very *Hinge* and *Center* of all evangelical Revelations: is the very *Life* and *Soul* of all evangelical Blessings. This Doctrine is not a little illustrated, and is greatly recommended, by the Imputation of *Adam's Sin*.

Contraries, You know, cast Light upon, and set off each other, Winter and its severe Cold, makes Spring and its chearing Warmth, more sensibly perceived, and more highly pleasing. Such an Influence has the present Subject, with respect to the vicarious Obedience of our MEDIATOR. The

more

more clearly We see the *Reality* of the former, the more thoroughly We shall discern the *Expediency*, the *Excellency*, the *Glory* of the latter. The more We are humbled under the One, the more We shall rejoice, exult, and triumph in the Other.—The Apostle draws a long Parallel, or rather forms a strong Contrast between them, in the fifth Chapter to the *Romans*. He speaks copiously of *Adam's* Guilt, imputed to all Mankind for Condemnation and Death: that He may speak the more acceptably, the more charmingly of *CHRIST's* Righteousness, imputed to all Believers for Justification and Life. In that *dark Ground*, He well knew, this fairest loveliest Flower of *Christianity*; appears with *peculiar Beauty*; indeed with all the Beauty of consummate Wisdom, and adorable Benignity.

Ther. It really seems to me a Thing *impossible*, that one Man's Righteousness should be made Another's. Can one Man live by the Soul of Another? Or be learned by the Learning of Another?—Good *Aspasio*, never attempt to maintain such palpable Absurdities. They will expose *Christianity* to the Scorn of Infidels.

Assp. If Infidels scoff at this comfortable Truth, their Scoffing will be, like all their other Cavils, not the *Voice* of Reason, but the *Clamour* of Prejudice.

My Friend's Objection insinuates, what We never assert; That the *Essence* of this Righteousness is transferred. Which would doubtless be in Fact impossible as it is in Theory absurd.—But this We disavow, as strenuously as You can oppose. Our REDEEM-

ER's

ER's Righteousness is made ours, not by *Infusion*, but by *Imputation*. The very Terms We use, may acquit Us from such a ridiculous Charge; as *Imputation* signifies *A placing to the Account of One, what is done by Another*. Accordingly We believe, That the Essence of this Righteousness is *CHRIST's*, the Merit of it Ours: that *CHRIST*, and *CHRIST* alone, wrought it out; but that working it out, in our Stead, *GOD* imputes it to Us; *GOD* accepts Us for it; accepts Us *as much, as if We had*, in our own Persons, performed it.

Ther. Not all your Refinements can reconcile me to this uncouth Notion.—The Practice is *unexampled*, and absolutely inconsistent with the Rules of *distributive Justice*.

Asp. Ah! my *Theron*, if We seek an Example of *GOD's* *unbounded Goodness*, amongst the *puny* Proceedings of Men; We shall be led into the most egregious Misapprehensions. To measure one of the Sparks on your Ring, and fancy We have taken the Dimension of the *Alps* or the *Andes*, would be, in comparison of this Error, a small Mistake. Since, between a brilliant Speck, and a Range of Mountains, there is *some* Proportion: but between human Beneficence, and this heavenly Bounty, there cannot possibly be *any*.—However, the all-condescending *CREATOR* has been pleased, so to dispense his infinitely rich Grace; that We may find, though nothing parallel, nothing correspondent, yet some *faint* Shadow of its *Manner*, among the Affairs of Mankind. Something, that may give Us such an Idea of the stupendous Subject, as a *Glow-worm* would give of the Sun's Splendor, in case a Person
had

had never beheld that magnificent Luminary.—This Remark I must intreat You to recollect, whenever I attempt to *elucidate* the Mysteries of the Gospel, by the Occurrences of common Life.

When your worthy Minister was disabled, by a Rheumatic Disorder, from attending on the Business of his Function, several of the neighbouring Clergy gave Him their Assistance. Was He not, by this *vicarious* Performance of his Office, intitled to all the Profits of his Living?—It seems therefore not so unexampled a Thing, for one Person to act in another's Stead. And when a Service is thus discharged by the *Proxy*, the Benefit may, according to the received Maxims of Mankind, accrue to the *Principal*.—Did not *Jehu's* Descendents, even to the fourth Generation *, reap the Advantage of their great Grandfather's Zeal? Does not the Duke of — enjoy the Honours and Rewards, won by the Sword of a victorious Ancestor?—And may not the whole World of Believers, with *equal*, with *far greater* Justice, receive Life and Salvation, on Account of their all-deserving SAVIOUR? Especially, since He and They are one mystical Body; represented as such in Scripture, and considered as such by GOD.

No, say You: this is contrary to the Rules of *distributive* Justice.—What is your Idea of a *Surety*? How was the Affair stated, and how were Matters negotiated, with relation to your generous Acquaintance *Philander*? He, You know, was bound for an unfortunate Brother, who lately stepped aside.

Ther. The Debt, by his Brother's absconding, devolved upon *Philander*. He was responsible for all, and obliged to pay the whole Sum.

Asp.

* 2 Kings x. 20.

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Asp. Was not his Payment *as satisfactory* to the Creditor, as if it had been paid in the Debtor's own Person, by the Debtor's own Hand?

Ther. Certainly.

Asp. Was not the Debtor, by this vicarious Payment, released from all Fear of Prosecution, and acquitted from any future Demand on this Score?

Ther. He was.

Asp. Apply this Instance to the Redemption of Sinners by *JESUS CHRIST*: who is, in the sacred Writings, expressly styled *A Surety* *.—If *Phila-lander's* Act was deemed, in the Estimation of Law, the Act of his Brother; if the Deed of the former was imputed, in point of Advantage, intirely to the latter; why should not the same Effects take place, with regard to the divine Bondsman, and poor insolvent Sinners? Why should *that* be exploded in our Systems of Divinity, which is universally admitted in our Courts of Justice?

Ther. Obedience and Righteousness are, in the Nature of the Things themselves, *personal* Qualities, and *only* so. Every Man is that only (and can be nothing else) which He is in Himself.

Asp. Righteousness, as *dwelling in Us*, is undoubtedly a personal Quality; and Obedience, as *performed by Us*, comes under the same Denomination. But does this supersede the Necessity, or destroy the Existence of imputed Righteousness?—Your first Proposition is ambiguous. Let it speak distinctly; add *inherent* to your Righteousness; and the Sense becomes determinate, but the Argument falls to the Ground.

Every

* Heb. viii. 22.

Every Man is that only, (and can be nothing else) which He is in Himself.—If I had never seen the Bible, I should have yielded my ready Assent to this Proposition. But, when I open the Old Testament, and find it written by the Prophet; *In the LORD shall all the House of Israel be justified* *. When I turn to the New Testament, and hear the Apostle saying; *Ye are complete in HIM, who is the Head of all Principalities and Powers* †. I cannot concur with *Theron*, without contradicting Revelation.—*Israel*, or the true Believer, is said to be justified; and the Foundation of this Blessing is declared to be, not in Himself, but in the LORD. The *Colossians* are said to be complete; which we are very certain, they were not in themselves; and are expressly assured, they were so in *CHRIST*.—Hence it appears, quite contrary to my Friend's Assertion, that Sinners both *have* and *are* that in *CHRIST*, which they neither have nor are in themselves. They *have*, by Imputation, a *Righteousness* in *CHRIST*; they *are*, by this imputed Righteousness, *complete* before G O D.

I believe, your Mistake proceeds from neglecting to distinguish between *inherent* and *imputed*.—We never suppose, That a profane Person is devout, or an intemperate Person sober. This is *inherent* Righteousness.—But We maintain, That the Profane and Intemperate, being convinced of their Iniquity, and betaking themselves to the all-sufficient SAVIOUR for Redemption, are interested in the Merit both of his Life and of his Death. This is *imputed* Righteousness.—We farther affirm, That,

though

* *Isai.* lxxv. 25. † *Coloss.* ii. 10.

though really abominable in Themselves, they are fully accepted by GOD, for his beloved SON'S Sake. This is *Justification* through imputed Righteousness.

Neither is this any private, precarious, or unsupported Opinion: it is the clear and positive Declaration of Scripture. *He justifieth*, He absolves from Guilt, He regards as righteous, and treats as such—*Whom?* Upright, obedient, sinless Creatures? This were nothing extraordinary—No; but *He justifieth the Ungodly* *, *that believe in the LORD JESUS*. Imputing, as the Ground of this Justification, *their* Trespases to Him, and *his* Righteousness to them.

Ther. I see no Occasion for such nice Distinctions, and metaphysical Subtilties, in plain popular Divinity. Hard Terms and abstruse Notions, may perplex the Head, but seldom improve the Heart.

Asp. Why then do You oblige Us to make use of them? If some People *twist* and *entangle* the Reins, it behoves Others to *clear* them of the Embarrassment, and *replace* them in their due Order.—Many Writers, either from an artful Design, or through a strange Inadvertence, have jumbled and confounded these two very different Ideas. Hence, they have started Objections to our Doctrine, which, the Moment You introduce this obvious Distinction, vanish into Air. They fall into a Mistake of their own; and then throw the Absurdity upon Others.

I am no more fond of hard Terms, and abstruse Notions, than my *Theron*. Neither can I

think the Instance before Us so abstruse a Notion. I am very certain, You are capable of comprehending much higher and nicer Refinements. Therefore, I must once again intreat You to remember the very material Difference, between *inherent* and *imputed* Righteousness. The former expresses Sanctification; the latter denotes Justification. By *this*, We are restored to the Favour of GOD; by *that*, We are made meet for his heavenly Kingdom.—Let this Distinction, which is easy, which is scriptural, which is important, take place; and We may for the future dismiss, what you call, our metaphysical Subtilties. Our Disagreement will cease, and our Opinions tally.

Ther. I question that, *Aspasio*. There are other Difficulties to be got over, before I can digest so crude an Opinion.—If we are justified by the Righteousness of *CHRIST*, then the Righteousness which justifies Mankind is *already* wrought out.

Asp. And this You take to be a most enormous Falshood. Whereas, I look upon it as a most delightful Truth.—The Righteousness, which justifies sinful Man, was *set on foot*; when GOD sent forth his SON from the Habitation of his Holiness and Glory, to be born of a Woman, and made subject to the Law.—It was *carried on*, through the whole Course of our SAVIOUR's Life; in which He always did such Things, as were pleasing to his heavenly FATHER.—It was *completed* at that ever memorable, that grand Period of Time, when the blessed *IMMANUEL* bowed his dying Head; and cried, with a strong triumphant Voice, IT IS FINISHED.

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If the justifying Righteousness was to be wrought by *Ourselves*, We could never be truly and fully justified till Death; till our Warfare was accomplished, and our *last* Act of Obedience exerted.—But how uncomfortable is this Opinion! How miserable would it render our Lives! And how directly does it run counter to the Determination of the Apostle; *We ARE justified* *!

Ther. Soothed then with this pleasing Surmise, may not the *Libertine* say to his Soul?—"Soul, take thine Ease in the most indolent Security. All my carnal Appetites, indulge Yourself without Restraint. Conscience, be under no Solicitude to live soberly, righteously, and godlily. For the Work is done; all done to thine Hands. Thou art like some fortunate Heir, whose Parents have been successfully industrious; and have left nothing to exercise the Diligence of their surviving Son, but only to possess the Inheritance, and live on Labours not his own."

Asp. The *Libertine*, who only speculates or disputes, may indeed abuse the *Doctrine* of Grace. But the *Believer*, who feels the *Power* of Grace, will improve it to better Purposes. Where the former only *fluctuates* in the Understanding, such detestable Consequences may ensue. Where the latter *operates* on the Heart, it will always produce very different Effects.—Such a Person, from such a Faith, will be no more inclined to Inactivity or Licentiousness; than our busy humming Companions are inclined, by this bright Sun-shine and all those expanded Blossoms,

to *sleep away* their Hours in the Hive. And You may as soon expect to see these Colonies of the Spring, swarming in *December*, clinging to an *Ice*, or dispersing themselves to gather Honey on the *Snow*; as to see a truly gracious Man, who is *dead to Sin*, living any longer therein *.—Whoever, therefore, so shamefully *perverts* so sweet and glorious a Doctrine, is a Witness against Himself, that He has neither Lot nor Portion in the inestimable Privilege. If an Animal suck Poison from the most wholesome Herbs, We are sure, from that infallible Indication, it is the vile Spider, or some envenomed Insect, not the valuable and industrious Bee.

Ther. Truly, *Aspasio*, I know not how to call that Doctrine sweet, much less can I recommend it as wholesome; which renders Repentance, personal Reformation, and inherent Rectitude *needless*. And if your Tenet is once received, all these Duties may fairly be dismissed. So that if the Thing was possible, yet it would be *pernicious*.

Asp. The Prophet was of another Mind: *They shall look on Him, whom they have pierced, and mourn †.* Sinners shall look, by Faith, to their crucified LORD: shall see him fastened with Nails to the cursed Tree; see Him stabbed to the Heart by the bloody Spear. And remembering, that this was the Punishment due to their Provocations; believing, that by this Punishment, they are freed from all penal Sufferings, and intitled to all spiritual Blessings: they shall, not be tempted to transgress, but incited to mourn; not play the Profligate, but act the Penitent.—The Apostle exactly agrees with the Prophet;

* Rom. vi. 2.

† Zech. xi. 10.

phet; and both are diametrically opposite to my Friend; *The Goodness*, the transcendent and amazing Goodness of GOD our SAVIOUR, instead of diverting from, *leadeth to Repentance* *.

Far from obstructing, it powerfully promotes, *personal Reformation*. For thus saith that all-wise Being, who intimately knows our Frame, and discerns what is most effectual to work upon our Minds; *The Grace of GOD, which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared; teaching Us, that denying all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, We should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil World* †. Grace, You observe, even that gloriously free Grace, which bringeth Salvation to unworthy Creatures, is a Dissuasive of all Vice, and an Encouragement to every Virtue.

As to *inherent Rectitude*, how can that be rendered needless by imputed Righteousness? Is Health rendered insignificant, by the Abundance of our Riches? Does Ease become superfluous, through the Beauty of our Apparel?—Holiness is the *Health* of our Souls, and the *Ease* of our Minds. Whereas, ungovernable Passions create keener Anguish, than a Brood of Vipers gnawing our Bosoms. Inordinate Desires are a more intolerable Nuisance, than Swarms of Locusts infesting our Abodes. To regulate *these*, and to restrain *these*, can never be needless, till Comfort and Sorrow change their Properties; till the diabolical Nature becomes equally desirable with the Divine.

Ther. The Believer, indeed, out of mere Generosity, may if He please, add Works of Righteousness

of his own. But his main Interest is secure without them.

Ass. Rather, *Theron*, He must out of Duty, He will out of Gratitude, and from the new Disposition of his Nature He cannot but, add to his Faith Works of Righteousness.

How runs the heavenly *Edict*, in this Case made and provided? *I will, That they who have believed in GOD, be careful to maintain good Works* *.—How beats the *Pulse* of a believing Soul? You may feel it, in that truly generous Demand, made by the *Psalmist*: *What shall I render unto the LORD for all the Benefits, that He hath done unto me* †? A grateful Heart wants not the Goad, but is a Spur to itself.—How leans the *Bias* of his Nature? He is new born; created in *CHRIST JESUS* unto good Works ‡; his Delight is in the Law of the LORD ||. And whatever is our supreme Delight, We are sure to prosecute; and prosecute with Ardour. *We cannot but speak the Things which We have seen and heard* §, was the Profession of the Apostles; and, if applied to practical

* *Tit.* iii. 8. The original Word *εργασίας* has a Beauty and an Energy, which, I believe, it is impossible for our Language to preserve, by any literal Translation. It implies, That a Believer should not only be exercised in, but eminent for, all good Works: should *show* Others the Way, and *outstrip* them in the honourable Race: be both a *Pattern*, and a *Patron* of universal Godliness.

† *Psal.* cxvi. 12.

‡ *Eph.* ii. 10.

|| *Psal.* i. 2.

§ *Cannot but*—This is an Expression, used by the Apostles, *Acts* iv. 20. It describes the genuine and habitual Propensity of their new Nature. As the compassionate Bowels cannot but yearn at Spectacles of Misery: as the benevolent Heart cannot but dilate with Pleasure, at the Sight of a Brother's Happiness; so the new Creature in

CHRIST,

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practical Godliness, is the Experience of the *Christian*.

Nor can his main Interest be secure without a holy Obedience. Because, the Judge of the World, at the Day of eternal Retribution, will declare to the Workers of Iniquity; *I never knew You; depart from me* *. Because Holiness, though not the Cause of our Admittance to the beatific Vision; is so necessary a Qualification, that *without it no Man shall see the LORD* †. Without it, there is no Access to Heaven, neither could there be any Enjoyment in Heaven.

Ther. Pray, recollect Yourself, *Aspasio*. According to the Tenour of your own Illustration, the Necessity of *personal* Obedience is evidently vacated. For, how can the Law demand a Debt of the Principal, which has been fully discharged by the Surety?

Asp. We are no longer under a Necessity of obeying the Law, *in order to* establish our Justification, or lay the Foundation for our final Acceptance. We are nevertheless engaged, by several other *indispensible* Obligations, to regulate our Conversation according to those sacred Precepts. Because—this is the most authentic Proof of our Love to the gracious REDEEMER; *If ye Love me, keep my Commandments* ‡. — This is an infallible Evidence of our Union with that exalted Head; *He that abideth in Me, and I in Him, the same bringeth forth*

O 4

much

CHRIST, cannot but desire to glorify, and delight to obey—cannot but be *ambitious* (*φιλοτιμωμεθα*) to resemble, and covet to enjoy—the ever blessed GOD.

* Matt. vii. 23. † Heb. xii. 14. ‡ John xiv. 15.

much Fruit *.—This is the invariable and the most effectual Method, of adorning † our Profession, and magnifying its divine Author; *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father, which is in Heaven ‡.*

Do We then make void the Law, through Faith in the imputed Righteousness of our LORD?—The Apostle shall reply. And He replies with a kind of zealous Abhorrence; *GOD forbid!*—Not content to deny this false Insinuation, He maintains the very Reverse; *Yea, We establish the Law* ||. Considered as the original *Covenant of Life*; We provide for its Honour, by the perfect Obedience of *CHRIST*. Considered as an invariable *Standard of Duty*; We enforce its Observance, by the most rational, manly §, and endearing Motives.

Ther. Should We admit this Doctrine, Mankind could no longer be considered as in themselves, and solely in themselves *accountable* Creatures. Nor would the future Judgment be an *equitable* Distribution of Rewards and Punishments; but only *GOD's* awful and uncontrollable Execution of his own arbitrary and irreversible Decrees.

Ass. I have never been accustomed to consider Mankind, under the Gospel Dispensation, as *accountable solely* in themselves. Because, in this comfortable and benign Scheme, a *MEDIATOR* intervenes; undertakes to answer for his People; and bears the *Chastisement of their Peccate*.—Were We *accountable*

* John xv. 3.

† Good Works are therefore styled, *undeign'd, graceful, ornamental, beautiful* Works, *Tit.* iii. 8.

‡ *Matth.* v. 16.

|| *Rom.* iii. 31.

§ *Hos.* xi. 4.

countable solely in Ourselves, *CHRIST* as our great High-Priest, would be set aside; and his Sacrifice, as a Propitiation for Sin, be of none Effect.

Why may not the future Judgment, be an equitable Distribution of Rewards and Punishments? If those, who reject the Atonement of the dying *JESUS*, and refuse to depend on his consummate Righteousness, are left to stand or fall, according to the Issue of their own Obedience. If Believers, on the other hand, are accepted through their most meritorious REDEEMER; but rewarded with higher or inferior Degrees of Felicity, in proportion to the Sanctity of their Nature, and Usefulness of their Lives.—I see nothing arbitrary in this Procedure; but an admirable Mixture of just Severity, and free Goodness—On those, who reject the Atonement, *just Severity*—To those, who rely on their SAVIOUR, *free Goodness*.

Ther. The Obedience of *CHRIST* was wholly due for Himself; therefore could not merit for Another.

Ass. A bold Assertion this! Whoever can make it good, will undoubtedly overthrow my Opinion; and, at the same Time, destroy all my Hopes. But surely, *Theron*, it is not your real Sentiment.

Could it then be Matter of Duty in the eternal SON, to be born of a Woman; and in the LORD of Lords, to become the Servant of all? Could it be Matter of Duty in the KING of Glory, to embrace the Infamy of the Cross; and in the PRINCE of Life, to pour out his Soul unto Death?—If all this was Matter of Duty, the ever blessed *JESUS* (How shall I speak it? Who can believe it?) was

no better than an *unprofitable* Servant. For, *such* is the acknowledged Character of *every* One, who does no more than is his Duty to do *.

Ther. Not so fast, my Friend. Remember what the Scripture affirms. *CHRIST* is said to receive a *Commandment*, and be *subject* to the Law: Both which Expressions evidently imply Duty.

Assp. In order to accomplish our Redemption, the Son of *GOD* submitted Himself to the Authority of the Law, and became obedient to its Precepts. But, this was his own *spontaneous* Act; the Matter of his *free* Choice; to which He lay under no Manner of *Obligation*, till He engaged to be our Surety.

Being in the Form of GOD, He was Lord of the Law; and no more subject to its Commands, than obnoxious to its Curse. Nevertheless, *He took upon Him the Form of a Servant*; and was made under the Law. Wherefore? That He might obtain everlasting Life and Glory for Himself? No; but that He might *redeem those who were under the Law* †. From which it appears, that both his Engagement and his Obedience were, not for Himself, but for his People. Therefore the Prophet cries out, with holy Exultation; *To Us a Child is born; To Us a Son is given* †! His incarnate State and human Nature, together with all that He did and suffered in both, were for Us: *those* assumed on our Account, *these* referred to our Advantage.

Let

* Luke xvii. 10.

† Gal. iv. 5.

† *Isai. ix. 6. Est præterea Emphasis singularis in Voca nobis. Significat id, quod omnes sentiunt, nostro Bono & Commmodo natum esse hunc Puerum Imperatorem.*

Vitringa in loc.

Let Us consider this, and be amazed, and be charmed.—The great universal LORD vouchsafes to pay universal Obedience ! What *Condescension* was Here !—He vouchsafes to pay it, for Us Men, and for our Redemption ! What *Goodness* was this !

Ther. Before We indulge the devotional Strain, We should take Care that our Devotion is founded on *rational* Principles. Otherwise it may prove, like the Flash of a Sky-rocket, transient and momentary.

Asp. For this, I think, there is a solid Foundation in Reason, as well as Scripture. As soon as the Man *CHRIST JESUS* was united to the Second Person of the TRINITY, He must have, by virtue of that Union, an unquestionable Right to everlasting Life and Glory. Therefore, He could be under *no Necessity* of obeying, in order to procure either Honour or Happiness for *Himself*. But all that He performed, in conformity to the preceptive Part of the Law, He performed under the Character of a *public Person* : in the Place, and for the Benefit of his spiritual Seed. That they might be interested in it, and justified by it.

Ther. Be it so : the Believer is interested in *CHRIST*'s Righteousness.—Pray, is He interested in all, or only in Part ?—If in *all*, then every Believer is equally righteous, and equally to be rewarded. Which is contrary to an allowed Maxim, That there will be different Allotments of Happiness in the heavenly World.—If in *Part* only, how will You ascertain the Degree ? What Proportion belongs to this Person, and what to the other ?—Either Way, your Scheme is inextricably embarrassed.

Asp.

Asp. The Reply to my *Theron's* Inquiry, is easy; and the Embarrassment He mentions, is but imaginary. — Every true Believer is interested in *all* *CHRIST's* Righteousness; in the *whole* Merit of his spotless Nature, of his perfect Obedience, and expiatory Death. Less than the Whole, would be unavailable. Whereas, the Whole renders Us *completely* justified.

You are a great Admirer of Anatomy, *Theron*, and must undoubtedly remember the very *peculiar* Structure of the Ear. Other Parts of the Body are progressive in their Growth. Their Bulk is proportioned to the infantile, or manly Age. But the Organs of Hearing, I have been informed, are *precisely* of the *same* Size, in the feeble Infant, and the confirmed Adult. — Justification likewise, being absolutely necessary to a State of Acceptance with *GOD*, is, in every Stage of the *Christian* Course, and even in the first Dawn of sincere Faith, complete. With regard to the *Existence* of the Privilege, there is no Difference * in the Babes, the young Men, the Fathers in *CHRIST*. The *Perception*, the *Assurance*, the comfortable *Enjoyment* of the Mercy, may increase.

But

* To the same Purpose speaks one of our most celebrated Divines; as great an Adept in sacred Literature, as Ages have produced. — “All are justified *alike*: the *Truth* of Faith justifying, not the *Measure*. Justification therefore is the same in All that believe: though their Belief be in different Degrees. So, once in the Wilderness, all gathered not Manna in the same Measure; yet, when all came to measure, they had all *alike*; none above an Omer, none under.”

Lightfoot, Vol. II. p. 1052.

But the Mercy itself is incapable of Augmentation.

The various Advances in Sanctification account for the various Degrees of future Glory. And not account for them only, but render them intirely reasonable; and, according to our Apprehension of Things, unavoidable.—As to settling the *Proportion*, We may safely leave that to the SUPREME ARBITRATOR. He, who *meteth out the Heavens with a Span*, and *setteth a Compass upon the Face of the Deep*, cannot be at a loss to adjust this Particular.

Ther. The Organs of Hearing, though not precisely, are *very nearly*, of the same Bulk, in the Babe and the Man. They acquire, from advancing Years, scarce any Thing more than an Increase of Solidity. So that I make no Objection to your Illustration, but only to your Doctrine.

If *CHRIST* has done all, and we are intitled to his whole Merits only by believing; to be saved must be the *easiest* Thing in the World. Whereas, the Bible represents Christianity, as a sharp *Warfare*, a State of *Wrestling*, a Course of *Striving*.—In good Truth, *Assasio*, You prophecy pleasing Things. Divinity is not your Profession; or else, I should number You among “the smooth, emollient, downy Doctors.” For, according to the Articles of your Creed, there is no more Difficulty in securing Heaven, than in rising from our Seat.

Assp. A speculative Assent to all the Principles of Religion, is, I acknowledge, a very easy Matter. It may, it *must* exist, whenever there is a tolerable Capacity for Reasoning, and a due Attention to Evidence.

dence.—This notional Faith forced its Way into the Breast of *Simon* the Sorcerer *; and extorted a Confession from the dying Lips of *Julian* † the Apostate. Irresistible as the Stroke of Lightning, terrible also as its fiery Glare, it flashes Conviction into the very Devils. Even those execrable Spirits *believe and tremble* ‡.

But the Faith, which, far from resting in Speculation, exalts the Desires; regulates the Passions; and refines the whole Conversation—the Faith which, according to the expressive Language of Scripture, *purifies the Heart; overcomes the World; and sets the Affections on Things above*—this truly noble and triumphant Faith, is no such easy Acquisition. This is the Gift of an infinite Benefactor: the Work of a divine Agent. Called, therefore, by way of super-eminent Distinction, *Faith of the Operation of GOD* §. Because, GOD himself, by the effectual Working of his mighty Power, produces it in the human Soul.

The

* Acts viii. 13.

† It is related in Ecclesiastical History, That, when the Emperor *Julian* was setting out upon his *Parthian* Expedition, He threatened to persecute the *Christians* with the utmost Severity, as soon as He returned victorious.—Upon this Occasion, *Libanius* the Rhetorician, with an insulting Air, asked one of them; *What the Carpenter's Son was doing, while such a Storm hung over his Followers?*—The Carpenter's Son, replied the Christian, *is making a Coffin for your Emperor.*—The Event proved the Answer to be prophetic. For, in an Engagement with the Enemy, the wretched Apostate was mortally wounded; and cried, with his expiring Breath, *Vicisti, O Galilee! I am vanquished, O Galilean! Thy Right-hand bath the Pre-eminence!*

‡ Jam. ii. 19.

§ Col. ii. 12.

The Exercise of this Faith, I would not compare to an active Gentleman, rising from his Seat; but rather to a *ship-wrecked* Mariner, labouring to gain some Place of Safety. — He espies a large *Rock*, that rears its Head above the boisterous Flood. To this He bears away, and to this He approaches: but, whirling Winds, and dashing Waves, drive Him back to an unhappy Distance. — Exerting all his Strength, He advances nearer still; and attempts to climb the desirable Eminence. When, a sweeping Surge interposes, and drenches Him again in the rolling Deep. — By determined Efforts, He recovers the Space He had lost. Now, He fastens on the Cliff, and has almost escaped the Danger. But, there is such a Numbness in his Limbs, that He cannot maintain his Hold; and such an impetuous Swell in the Ocean, that He is once more dislodged, and plunged afresh into the raging Billows. — What can he do? His Life, his precious Life, is at stake. He must renew, still renew his Endeavours. And let Him not abandon Himself to Despair. The MASTER sees Him, amidst all his fruitless Toil. Let Him cry earnestly, *LORD, save me! I perish!* and HE, who commandeth the Winds and the Waves, will be sure to put forth his Hand, and rescue Him from the devouring Waters.

Such, my Friend, so *painful*, so *assiduous* are the Struggles of Faith; before it can rest, in peaceful Security, on the *Rock of Ages*, *CHRIST JESUS*. Of this You may, some Time or other, be assured, not only from my Lips, but from your own Experience.

Ther.

Ther. What may happen in some future Period of Time, is beyond my Power to foresee. At present, I am apt to think, We must put a stop to the theological Lecture. Don't You remember our Engagement with *Altinous*? And You will own, that Punctuality in performing our Promises, is at least a moral Virtue, if it be not a *christian* Grace.





DIALOGUE VI.



SPASIO's Affairs called Him to *London*. He staid in Town a few Days : but as soon as Business was finished, he quitted the City, and hastened to his Friend's *Country-Seat*.—Upon his Arrival, He found some agreeable Company, that came on purpose to spend the Evening with the Family. This Incident prevented the immediate Prosecution of their Subject.—As the next Morning proved misty, and unfit for walking abroad, *Theron* invited *Aspasio* to pass an Hour in his Study.

It was situate at the Extremity of a large Gallery : which, while it conducted the Feet to a Repository of Learning, interposed between the Ear, and all the Disturbance of domestic Affairs. So that You are accommodated with every Thing, that may regale a studious Mind ; and incommoded with nothing, that may interrupt a sedate Attention.—*Aspasio* readily consented to the Proposal ; but desired, first, to take a Turn in this beautiful *Oblong*, and divert Himself with the Decorations of the Place,

Asp. A very short Survey, *Theron*, is sufficient to discover the Correctness of your Judgment, and the true Delicacy of your Taste.—Here, are no *impertinent* and *frivolous* Exhibitions of romantic Tales, or poetic Stories. Here, are no *indecent* Pieces of Imagery, that tend to corrupt a chaste, or inflame a wanton Fancy.—On the contrary, I am presented with a Collection of Maps, accurately drawn by the most able Hands; and several remarkable Transactions of Antiquity, most eloquently told in the Language of the Pencil.—You have happily hit that grand Point, which the Gentleman of Refinement, as well as the Author of Genius, should ever keep in View—The Union of the *Beneficial* with the *Delightful* *.

Ther. Indeed, my *Aspasio*, I have often been disappointed, sometimes even shocked, in the Gardens, the Porticos, and the Walks of some modern *Virtuosi*. Their Pourtraits and Statues are little else, but an Assemblage of elaborate Trifles. *Ixion* stretched upon the Wheel, or *Phaeton* precipitated from the Chariot. *Apollo* stringing his Lyre, or *Jupiter* (I beg his supreme Highness's Pardon, for not giving Him the Precedence in my Catalogue) bestriding his Eagle, and balancing his Bolts.—Pray, where is the Advantage of being introduced to this *fabulous* Tribe of Gentry? What noble Idea can they awaken, or what valuable Impression leave upon the Mind? The best
We

* *Omne tulit Punctum, qui miscuit Utile Dulci.*

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We can say of such Performances, is, That they are Limning and Sculpture expensively thrown away.

This celebrated Trumpery, One can bear with, however. But, when the Painting and Sculpture, instead of cultivating Virtue, and improving our Morals, are calculated to be the very *Bane* of both — will You call *this* an elegant Entertainment? No: 'tis a Nuisance. 'Tis a Pest. — In the *Statues*, I grant, every Dimple sinks, and every Muscle swells, with the exactest Propriety. The Countenance is animated with Life, and the Limbs are ready to start into Motion. — The *Picture*, I am sensible, is as highly finished as the Effigy. The Distributions of Light and Shade most artfully adjusted. The Diminutions of the Perspective true to a Nicety. Nor can any Thing exceed the easy Flow of the Robe, unless it be the graceful Attitude, and almost speaking Aspect, of the principal Figure. — But, is this *masterly* Execution an Equivalent for the most *malignant* Effects? For sullyng the Purity of my Fancy, and poisoning the Powers of my Imagination?

Is it an Indication of the Owner's *judicious Taste*, to prefer Regularity of Features in the hammered Block, before orderly and harmonious Affections in his own Breast? Does it bespeak a *refined* Disposition, or a *benevolent* Temper, to be so extravagantly enamoured with the Touches of a lascivious Pencil; as to expose them in the most frequented Passages, and obtrude them on every unwary Guest? — Surely, this can create no very advantageous Opinion of a Gentleman's *intellectual* Discernment. Much less can it raise an amiable Idea of his *moral* Character.

ter *. On such Occasions, I am strongly tempted to suspect, That real Honour is a Stranger, where common Decency † is wanting.

As for the Artist, One can hardly forbear execrating his hateful Folly, who could prostitute such fine Talents to such infamous Purposes.—Detested be the Chizzel ! that teaches, though with inimitable Dexterity, the cold obdurate Marble to inkindle dissolute Affections.—Abhorred be the Pencil ! that makes no other Use of the most lovely Colours, than to pollute the Canvass, and insnare the Spectator.

It is argued, I know, that many of those Pieces are the completest Models extant. — An *overlasting Reproach* this to the Art: but no Apology for the Performances. Since, the more nicely they are executed, the more mischievous ‡ is their Influence. It strikes

* 'Tis Pity, but the Advice of *Cicero*, that great Master of elegant Taste, and polite Manners, was received as a *Standard* of Regulation, by all our Connoisseurs in the fine Arts. *In primis provideat, ne Ornamenta Edium atque Hortorum Vitium aliquod indicent inesse Moribus. De Offic.*

† A Gentleman, observing some gross Indelicacies of this Kind, at the Seat of a Person of Distinction, very acutely (and, I believe, too justly) said;

His Paintings are the Gibbet of his Name.

‡ I hope, it will not be thought improper; I wish, it was intirely needless; to animadvert upon a Practice, which is, not only a Reproach to our *Christian Profession*, but an Insult upon *national Decorum*. The Practice of exposing to public View, and offering to public Sale, such shameful *Prints*; as are fitted only to awaken licentious Desires, and cherish the most profligate Dispositions.

Such

strikes the surer, and sinks the deeper. It dresses Destruction gay, and paves with Beauty the Way to Ruin.

It is my chief Ambition, *Aspasio*, to have all my Decorations so circumstanced, that the Beholder may learn some *valuable Lesson* in Morality, or be reminded of some *important Event* in History: may find, even in the Scenes of his Amusement, something to establish his Virtue, or enlarge his Knowledge.

P 3

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Such Spectacles are a Species of the *rankest Poison*. And can the Poison be less pernicious, because it is received at the Eye, instead of passing through the Lips? Because it tends *more immediately* to debauch the Morals, and *but remotely* to destroy the Constitution? — No Wonder, so many of our Youths are corrupted, and so many Robberies committed; while such Scenes of pictured Lewdness, are suffered to inflame them with Lust, and habituate them to Impudence.

Another very *indecent Custom* has unaccountably stole its Way, into several Performances of Genius and Elegance. The Custom, I mean, of representing the *Muses*, the *Graces*, and other *romantic Personages*, in the Form of beautiful Ladies, partly, if not intirely, naked. — 'Tis true, here are no loose Adventures; no immodest Gestures; nay more, the Artist expresses *his own*, and consults *your Modesty*, by presenting You with a Position in Profile, by the Intervention of a Foliage, or the Lappet of a Robe. — But let me ask the ingenious Operator, If He would choose to introduce his Wife or his Daughter, in *such a Manner*, to public Company? — Is He startled at the Question? Is He shocked at the Thought? Then, let Him reflect, and let Others consider, Whether *that* can be graceful or allowable in a Picture, which would be brutal and unsufferable in common Life?

Socrates (who, before his Application to Philosophy, practised as a *Statuary*) could not but blush at this Abuse of his Art. And, being to form a Representation of the *Graces*, He represented them properly *habited*.

I frequently entertain my eldest Son, who is reading the *Greek* and *Latin* Historians, with an Explanation of my principal Drawings. That He may behold in Colouring, what He has perused in Narrative. — At this Instant, the Youth happened to make his Appearance; paying his Respects to *Aspasio*, and dutifully saluting his Father. — It just recurs to my Memory, said *Theron*, that some necessary Affairs of the Family, require my Attendance for a few Minutes. Will You excuse my Absence, good *Aspasio*; and permit my Son to supply my Place?

You will very much oblige me, by leaving me such a Companion. — And come, my dear Sir, addressing Himself to *Eugenio*, as I know You are a Lover of Learning, what think You of diverting Ourselves with these agreeable Books? Which give Us their instructive Lessons, not in puzzling Languages, but in pleasing Colours. — *Eugenio* spoke his Consent, and expressed his Modesty, by a becoming Blush. While *Aspasio* proceeded —

Asp. This is a striking Picture indeed! Hills piled on Hills form a most astonishing Prospect. What horrible Magnificence reigns amidst those wild and shaggy Rocks! Nature seems to have designed them for the Boundaries of the World. Yet those daring Troops are attempting to pass the prodigious Barrier. Who are they, *Eugenio*, and whom shall We call their Leader?

Eug. This, Sir, is the famous *Hannibal*, heading and encouraging his Army in the Passage of the Alps.

The

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The Sons of *Africa* seem to shiver with Cold, as they traverse those frozen Regions, and march among the Clouds.

Asp. 'Tis the very same. Some, You observe, climb, with excessive Toil, the steep and craggy Cliffs. Others, with far greater Difficulty, descend through dreadful Declivities of Ice; exposed all the while, to the Arrows of the Mountaineers. — Some, endeavouring to avoid the Showers of Steel, slip with their Feet, and tumble headlong down the vast projecting Promontories. See from what a Height they are falling! Carriages and their Drivers, the Horse and his Rider! And at what a Distance still, from the stony Abyss below! — Some lie, with closed Eye-lids, and ghastly Features, dashed to Death at the very Bottom. Others, writhing with the Torture of mangled Limbs, and broken Bones, lift up an agonizing Look to their Comrades. — Their Comrades, insensible of a Brother's Misery, and wholly intent upon their own Preservation, hang frightfully suspended on the Edges of the Precipice. The Precipice seems to totter as they cling; and the alarmed Spectator expects, every Moment, a hideous Down-fall. — Are You not startled at the View, *Eugenio*, and in pain for the hardy Adventurers?

Eug. I am, Sir. And I wonder, how they will extricate themselves from these perilous Circumstances. I have read in *Livy*, that they cut their Way through the Rocks, after they had softened them with *Vinegar*. But is this probable? How could they procure a sufficient Quantity, amidst those desolate Mountains?

Asp. I believe, their *Resolution* and their *Perseverance*, were the Vinegar. These open a Road through Rocks. These, under the Conduct of Prudence, and the Favour of Heaven *, surmount all Obstacles. Influenced by these, the Survivors press boldly on; and are determined to vanquish the Horrors of Nature, as a Prelude to their Victory over the Forces of Rome. These, I hope, will be the constant Companions of my *Eugenio's* youthful Studies; and will enable Him also to conquer the Difficulties; that lie in his Way to Learning.

What

* Under the *Favour of Heaven*—I cannot but wish, that the Relator of *Lord Anson's Voyage round the World*, had anticipated *Aspasio's* Remark. Had made some grateful Acknowledgments to an interposing PROVIDENCE, in that masculine, nervous, noble Narrative.—A Narrative of such signal Deliverances, so critically timed, and so surprisngly circumstanced; as, in the Course of one Expedition, are scarcely to be paralleled.

I am persuaded, it would have been no Disparagement of the great Commander, and his gallant Officers; to have it thankfully recognized, on some very unexpected, yet most advantageous Turn of Affairs, THIS HATH GOD DONE!—Neither could it have detracted from the Merit of the brave Sailors, to have confessed, on many hazardous Emergencies; That all their Resolution, all their Address, and the Exertion of their utmost Abilities, had been only *lost Labour*, without the remarkable Co-operation of divine Goodness.—And I am apprehensive, that it must considerably diminish the Delight of many Readers, to observe the blessed Author of all these Mercies, passed by unnoticed, unacknowledged, and without any Share of the Praise.

The Sarcastm on Pope *Adrian* and his Exploits, I fear, would be too proper on this Occasion, *Hic DEUS nihil fecit.*

What is our next Draught? At each End we have a Group of living Figures. All the intermediate Space is an extensive Tract of Land, diversified only by rapid Rivers, horrid Defarts, and mountainous Ridges; with here and there a few savage Natives, in uncouth Dresses, and formidable Arms.—It is more like a *Map*, than a *Picture*. And the most remarkable Beauty is, the *aerial Perspective*. Which puts a very agreeable Cheat upon our Eyes; causing Us to behold, on an Ell of Canvass; the Space of many Hundreds of Miles.

Eug. This represents *The Retreat of the ten Thousand Greeks*. First We behold them in the Plains of *Media*; at an immense Distance from their native Country; without Guides; without Provision; and what is the most desperate Calamity of all, deprived of their ablest Officers by Treachery and Murder.—Well may they look dejected. How have I pitied them, as I read their Story! Abhorred the Perfidy of their Enemies, and wished them all Success in their hazardous Enterprize!

Asp. Don't you perceive, their drooping Spirits begin to revive, and some Gleam of Hope diffuses itself through their Countenances, while they listen to the eloquent *Xenophon*? Who stands conspicuous in the Midst, haranguing his Soldiers, and rousing their Courage. But, Ah! what a vast Extent of unknown Climes must they traverse, with a numerous and victorious Army, harassing them in Flank, or hanging upon their Rear! What Fatigues must they sustain, what Hardships endure, before they arrive at their wished for Home! — *Home*! Fired by the enchanting Name, and animated by their
brave

brave philosophic Leader, they resolve to push their Way through all the Extremes of Peril and of Pain. To scatter, with their little Band, the incircling Millions of *Barbarians*, is the smallest of their Achievements. They cross Rivers, they scale Rocks, whose slippery Banks, and craggy Summits, are lined with opposing Nations. They wade through Deserts of Snow; and pass over inhospitable Mountains, the far more dreaded Abodes of *Desolation*, *Drought*, and *Famine*. They encounter the Keeness of the northern Storm, and all the Rigour of the most malignant Seasons.—As some of these Articles are incapable of being expressed by the Pencil, the Artist remits Us to the Historian; and has contented Himself, with marking out the most distinguished Stages of this memorable Expedition. Only We view the courageous Itinerants, once again, on a pretty lofty Eminence. There they appear, not with their former Dejection, but in all the Transports of Joy.

Eug. This, Sir, is the Mountain *Tecqua*. From whence they had the first View of the Sea, and the first Dawn of Safety. There they embrace one another, and extol their Commanders, especially the noble *Xenophon*: Whose History gives me great Delight, and his manly yet benign Aspect strangely attracts my Esteem. Methinks, under such a General, I could have been willing to take my Share, in all the Toil, and all the Hazards of the Expedition.

Asp. Would my *Eugenio*? Then I will lift Him under a Captain, unspeakably more accomplished and beneficent. Young as You are, You shall, from this Hour, commence a Soldier and a Traveler.

A *Soldier*, to fight against Sin, and every Temptation. A *Traveler*, to pass through the Wilderness of this World, unto the Land of everlasting Rest.— Though your Enemies may be numerous, and your Journey tedious, yet faint not, neither be discouraged. The LORD of Heaven is your Guide, and Heaven itself shall be your exceeding great Reward. When You arrive at those happy Abodes, your Delight will infinitely surpass, all that the *Grecians* felt on *Tecqua*; when their ravished Eyes beheld, and their Tongues with Extasy shouted, *The Sea! The Sea!*

The Scene of yonder Picture, I would venture to affirm, lies among the antient *Jews*.

Eug. How can You tell this, Sir, at such a Distance?

Asp. By the Fringes annexed to their Garments.— GOD Almighty commanded all the *Jews*, to observe this Peculiarity in their Habit *. That, their very Clothes, being different from the Apparel of their

* One would wonder, how the *Jews* can so *tenaciously* adhere to their Law, and yet so *apparently* neglect its Precepts. Where are the Sons of *Abraham*, that observe this express and positive Command of JEHOVAH? Though *this* indeed *might* be obeyed, yet many of the *Mosaical* Injunctions are rendered, and by *Providence* itself, absolutely impracticable. Is not this therefore a most incontestible Proof—a Proof, not invented by the Arts of Sophistry, but written by the Finger of the ALMIGHTY himself—that the *legal* Ordinances are abolished, in order to make way for a *better* Dispensation? When the Avenues are become inaccessible, the House untenable, and the principal Apartments irreparably decayed; is not this the most cogent Admonition to the Inhabitants, that they betake themselves to some new and more commodious Residence?—See Numb. xv. 38.

their *Heathen* Neighbours, might admonish them not to be conformed to their idolatrous Worship, and licentious Manners.—This, as well as every other divine Command, our *LORD JESUS CHRIST* most exactly obeyed. Therefore, We are told by the evangelical Historian, That the diseased Woman, who touched but the Hem of his Garment, was restored to Health. Hem it is, in our *English* Bibles. But, if You consult, as I hope you often will, that most excellent of all Books, the *Greek Testament*; You will find, that the original Word might more properly be rendered *Fringe**.—However, let Us pass from the Drapery to the Design.

Eug. Here, We see *David* in one of the most threatening Exigencies of his whole Life. *Saul*, more like a Blood-Hound than a King, pursues the best of Sons, and the most valuable of Subjects. He has extended the Wings of his very superior Army, in order to surround † the injured Hero, and his Handful of Associates.

Asp. This is the most animated, and, I think, the most masterly Performance, that has hitherto come under our Notice.—Consternation and Doubt agitate their

* *Matt. ix. 20. Κεζωνιδος.*

† To this, or some such Incident, may be applied a Passage of the *Psalms*; which, in our Translation, is very obscure; has scarce any Sense, or, if any, a very unjustifiable one. *Wherefore should I fear in the Days of Evil, when the Wickedness of my Heels compasseth me round about?* Psalm xlix. 5. — *Wherefore?* The Reason is very apparent. When Wickedness cleaves to our Heels, or attends our Goings, it raises an Army of Terrors. It unsheathes the Sword of divine Vengeance, and levels at our guilty Heads every Threatening in the Book of *GOD*.

Surely

their Looks. Shall they surrender themselves, as so many tame Victims, to a Tyrant's Fury? Or, shall they cut their Way to Safety, through the Hearts of Countrymen, Friends, and Brothers? Dreadful Dilemma!—While they are debating, the Pursuers are closing upon them. A few, a few Minutes more, must decide their Fate.—But who is the Person that intervenes, just at this critical Juncture?

Eug. It is a Messenger from the principal Inhabitants of *Judea*. He comes breathless and trembling. Amazement in his Face, and Dust upon his Head. *An Invasion!* He cries—*An Invasion!*—*The Philistines have poured themselves upon our Frontiers!*—*The Philistines are over-running the Land*!*

Asp. Upon the Receipt of this News, See! what Vexation reddens in the disappointed Monarch's Aspect!

Surely then another Translation should be given to the Words, and a different Turn to the Sense! And another Translation the Words will bear; a different Sense the Connection demands. *Wherefore should I fear, when Wickedness compasseth me about at my Heels?* This is a fine spirited Interrogation. This implies a great and noble Truth. From this also the Verse appears, not only with Propriety, but with Beauty.—*When Wickedness, or the malicious Attempts of wicked Men—compass me about, surround me, threaten me on every Side,—nay, when they are at my very Heels, just upon the Point to seize, overwhelm, and crush me; so that the Danger seems both inevitable and imminent.—Yet even then, having GOD's almighty Power and inviolable Faithfulness for my Protection, wherefore should I be alarmed? Alarmed! No; confiding in such a Safeguard, I will bid Defiance to my Enemies, and bid Adieu to my Fears.*

* This Event is related, 1 *Sam.* xxiii. 25, &c. And it is one of the most extraordinary Instances of a divine Interposul, at the very Crisis of Need, that any History has recorded,

pect! What Anger lightens in his Eye! At the same Time, what pale Reflections on his Country's Danger, mingle themselves with the fiery Passions, and almost quench the Flame in kindling in his Cheeks. Shall the Vulture relinquish his Prey, even when it lies fluttering under his Talons? Galling Thought! But his Kingdom is at stake. If he does not immediately advance to repel the Enemy, his All, his All is lost. Burning therefore with Indignation, yet chilled with Fear, He turns, hasty though reluctant, away *.—Are You not charmed, *Eugenio*, with this Description of *tumultuous* and *contrary* Passions? Which afford the finest Subject for historic Painting, and are so happily expressed in this Piece.

Eug. Indeed, Sir, I am *shocked*, rather than charmed. The very Looks of that revengeful Monarch fill me with Horror. What must He suffer in his Mind, who discovers such Rage and Anguish in his Features! I would not have his furious Temper, for all his royal Power.

Asp. Then, my dear *Eugenio*, You must endeavour to suppress every Emotion of Envy and Malevolence. You must cherish a cordial Good-will to all Men; and learn to rejoice in *their* Excellencies and Happiness, as well as in *your own*. Envy is the Worm that gnaws, Envy is the Fury that embroils his wretched Heart. And an Author, with whom You will ere long be acquainted, has assured Us;

Invidia Siculi non invenerunt Tyranni

Tormentum majus.

Hor.

The

* ————— *Εκον αμωμων θυμω.*

Thus *Homer* expresses the Contrariety of Passions, that frequently operate, at the same Time, in the same Breast.

The next is a Kind of *Night-piece*. Stars are in the Sky, and the new Moon rides on the Skirts of the Hemisphere. Which affords just Light enough to distinguish Objects.—This is a perfect Contrast to the foregoing. We see no Conflict of jarring Passions. But the principal Person appears *calm* and *composed*, as the Night that surrounds Him. He stands on the Bank of a River, thoughtful and attentive, as though He was pondering or executing some important Project.

Eug. This is *Cyrus the Great*. He stands upon the Banks of the *Euphrates*; not far from *Babylon*. He points with his Sceptre, and is giving Directions to his Army. Their Orders are, to pass through the Channel of the River, (which is drained of its Water) in order to surprise the City.

Asp. This is a Prince of very superior Dignity. The honoured Instrument of executing JEHOVAH's Counsels. He was foretold by the Prophet *Isaiah*, and even mentioned by Name *, more than two hundred Years before his Birth. Let Us wish Him Prosperity. For He goes to humble the Pride of *Babylon*, and release the Captivity of *Israel*.—See! with what regular Movements, and what calm Alacrity, his Troops advance. Silence seems to escort them; while, under Covert of the Shades, and with Providence at their Head, they march along a Road, never before trodden by the Foot of Man.—The Soldiers of the Garrison, have abandoned their Station on the Wall, to join in the dissolute Indulgence of this fatal Night. The Inhabitants, like many a heedless Sinner, are lulled in Security, even on the very Brink of Ruin.

* *Isai. xlv. 28. 1.*

Eug. Why are those *brazen Gates*, which lead to the River, placed in such a distinguished Point of View? They strike my Eye more, I think, than all the Monuments of Art and Grandeur, which adorn that superb City.—And let me farther ask, Whether the Painter has not offended against Probability, in suffering them to stand wide open? On the Approach of so formidable an Adversary, I should expect to have found them shut with all possible Security.

Asp. In this Particular, the Painter has shewed his Judgment, and not forgotten his Piety. GOD had devoted that haughty and oppressive Metropolis to Destruction. And You will perceive, from this Circumstance, how wonderfully He *over-rules* all Events, for the Accomplishment of his sacred Purposes. Had those ponderous Gates been shut *, the City had continued impregnable, and the whole Enterprize been defeated. But, through some accidental Forgetfulness, occasioned by the Disorders of this riotous Solemnity, or rather by a very *signal Interposition* of
divine

* See this very momentous, though seemingly inconsiderable Circumstance, finely illustrated by Mr. Rollin, and compared with a remarkable Prophecy in *Isaiab. Antient Hist.* Vol. II. p. 144, 153.—A Work, in which the most *entertaining* and *instructive* Events of Antiquity, are regularly digested; elegantly related; and stripped of those minuter Incidents, which make the Story move slow, and are apt to fatigue the Attention.—Concise, but judicious Observations are interspersed. Which may teach young Minds, to form a right Judgment of Things: and not be misled, by the *Plausibility* of popular Notions, or the *Partiality* of prejudiced Historians.—Many very distinguished *Predictions* of Scripture, are explained and confirmed by correspondent Facts, from the most authentic

divine Vengeance, they are left open, and afford an easy Entrance to Slaughter and Death. Which rush upon the unhappy Creatures, all sunk in Sleep, or over-charged with Wine, as a concealed Snare, in some dreadful unexpected Moment springs up, and inextricably entangles the unwary Bird.—Was I to inscribe this Picture with a Motto, I would choose the Apostle's Admonition, BE SOBER: BE VIGILANT.

Who is this, with his Length of Hair * flowing upon his Shoulders; with such Amplitude of Person-

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age,

tic Memoirs of classical Literature. Indeed, a perpetual Regard to the Elucidation and Honour of the *sacred Oracles*, runs through and ennobles the whole Performance.—Which Method, if not strictly conformable to the Rules of Historical Composition, is a *Transgression* of them greatly to their *Advantage*. It may be said to resemble the *golden Branch*, celebrated by *Virgil*, and plucked by his *Hero*. Whose Growth, though a Departure from the usual Laws of Vegetation, was far from depreciating the Value of the Tree.

Though I admire the Whole, I am charmed with the *Conclusion*. It is, I think, peculiarly pertinent, and imitably grand. Has a Dignity, an Elevation, a Majesty, which, somewhat like the Kingdom it describes, is quite unequalled, and little less than stupendous;

Παρθένος ἀργυρέη, χρυσῶν δ' ἐπιθήκη κορώνη.

* I believe, it was not customary with the *Romans*, especially their Warriors, to have long flowing Hair. This therefore might seem an Offence against what the *Italians* call *il Costume*, if the Painter was not supported by the Authority of *Livy*. Who, in his descriptive Picture of *Scipio*, gives Us the following Touches; *Species Corporis ampla ac magnifica. Præterquam quod suapte Natura multa Majestas inerat, adornabat promissa Cæsaries, Habitusque Corporis, non cultus Munditiis, sed virilis verè ac militaris.*

Lib. XXVIII. c. 35.

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age, such Magnificence of Mein, and noble Plainness of Habit.

Eug. This, Sir, is my favourite Piece. — My Father sometimes shews me the Heads of the Philosophers : but there is something so uninviting and severe in *Socrates* and *Diogenes*, that I could never much admire them. — But this, Sir, is *Scipio* ; the Thunderbolt of War, as *Virgil* calls Him. Here is something so lovely and graceful, as well as grand and majestic, that I am never weary of looking on Him.

Ass. He appears with a Lady of distinguished Beauty in his Hand.

Eug. This is the captive Princess ; who had been taken in War ; who was set apart for the General's Prize ; but whom He is now restoring to her espoused Husband.

Ass. You are right, *Eugenio*. — He has just led in his lovely Captive, attended by her Husband and Parents, amidst a full Assembly of *Romans* and *Celtiberians* ; the Victors and the Vanquished. His modest Eyes, You observe, are rather turned from, than gazing upon, the blooming Virgin. — Cannot You suppose, how the Spectators must be affected, upon the Opening of this extraordinary Scene ? Every One beholds, the Hero with Admiration, the Lady with Delight. Every Bosom is big with Expectation, or in Pain for the Event. After a short Pause, He addresses Himself to the Lover, in Words to this Effect — “ I am no Stranger to your Interest in this fine
“ Woman. The Fortune of War has put her in-
“ tirely into my Power. The Circumstances of my
“ Youth cannot render me insensible to so engaging
“ a Person. But with Us *Romans*, Honour and
“ Generosity

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“ Generosity have a more prevailing Influence, than
 “ transitory Pleasures. Take your Bride ; be happy
 “ in each Other ; and when You look upon this
 “ Gift, admire the *Romans*, be a Friend to *Rome*.”
 — Upon this He delivers Her (as You behold
 the Action here represented) to the enamoured
 Prince.

See ! how the Crouds, that cluster and hang a-
 round, are struck with the beneficent Deed !—In the
Geltiberians, We behold a Mixture of Veneration and
 Surprise. Their Looks are full of Meaning. Me-
 thinks, they are going to cry out ; *Excellent Man !*
 —In the *Romans*, We discern a conscious Superiority,
 and Exultation of Mind. Triumph is in their Fea-
 tures. As though they would say, *This wondrous Man*
is ours !—In the *Lady*, We admire the accomplished
 and modest Fair ; uniting all the Dignity of her
 Birth, with all the Delicacy of her Sex. What soft
 Confusion, and what tender Joy, appear in her Coun-
 tenance ! She is lost in Wonder, and at a loss for
 Words. She speaks the Acknowledgments of her
 Heart, by the silent Eloquence of a Tear ; which
 steals down her glowing Cheek, to bedew the kind
 Hand, that has protected her Innocence, and is de-
 livering Her to her Lord.—*Her Lord* is under an ap-
 parent, and a graceful Struggle, of Love and Grati-
 tude. He dotes upon his charming Princess, and He
 almost adores his generous Benefactor. We can
 hardly tell, whether He is going to clasp the former
 in his Arms, or throw Himself at the Feet of the la-
 ter.—The *aged Parents* express their Transport in a
 different Manner. Their Knees are bent to the
 Earth ; their Eyes are lifted up to Heaven ; they

implore, for their noble Guardian, every Blessing that the Gods can bestow.—*Scipio* Himself displays all the Magnanimity of the Conqueror, tempered with the Sedateness of the Philosopher, and softened with the Gentleness of the Friend. He gives Happiness, but He enjoys a greater. His Eyes sparkle with a sublime Delight; and He seems to anticipate the Applause, which this truly heroic Act will gain, in all Countries and in all Ages.

Eug. Is not this a greater Victory, than any that He had won, in the Field of Battle? And a nobler Triumph, than any that could be voted Him, by the applauding Senate? Amiable *Scipio*! Might I be a *Roman*, I would be no other than *Scipio*.

Asp. I wish You, my dear Sir, the Temperance and Generosity of *Scipio*. But from a better Motive than his. *He*, I fear, was too much swayed by a Spirit of Ambition, which *You* must endeavour to suppress, rather than cherish — A Spirit of Ambition, which pants after Distinction, and thirsts for Applause, is diametrically opposite to the Genius of the Gospel *. — It is a Lesson, which must infallibly be unlearned, if ever We become Possessors of Faith, or Partakers of *CHRIST* †.—It is a Root of Bitterness, which naturally produces Envy ‡; that most odious, and (as You have just now seen) most self-tormenting of all Tempers.—It is a Habit of Mind, which generally renders Men Incendiaries in the Church, and Disturbers of its Tranquillity §.—It is therefore, more like an enchanted Potion that inebriates, than a genuine Cordial that animates.

Eug.

* Gal. v. 26.

† John v. 44.

‡ Gal. v. 26,

§ 3 John 9, 10.

Eug. From what Motive then would You encourage me, to be diligent in the Pursuit of Learning, and in the Cultivation of every Virtue?

Asp. Not, that You may acquire the poor, contemptible, perishing Honour, which cometh from Men—but, that You may *please* GOD, your Almighty CREATOR—that You may *glorify* CHRIST, your infinitely condescending REDEEMER—that You may Yourself attain, what is the true *Dignity* and only *Felicity* of your Nature; and may be serviceable to the *best Interests* of your Fellow-creatures—even their present Holiness, and their eternal Happiness.

These are the *grand* and *endearing* Encouragements, which our Holy Religion proposes. These will operate, I am bold to aver, with a much sweeter, and a far more sovereign Efficacy, than all the glittering Enticements which Ambition can devise. And, what is above all other Considerations weighty, these will be more likely, or rather these will be very certain, to receive the *divine Blessing*.

You told me, You was never weary of contemplating *Scipio*. For which Reason, I promise Myself, You will not be fatigued or displeased, though I have so long confined your Attention to this Portrait.—But have We no Hero of *Britain*, fit to join this illustrious Triumvirate from *Rome*, *Persia*, and *Judea*?

Eug. The very next We meet, is one of our *English* Kings. But I cannot say, that I remember either his Name, or his Story.

Asp. How, my young Gentleman! Do You read the Annals of *other Nations*, and not acquaint Your-

self with the Affairs of *your own* Country?—If I was in your Place, I would apply myself to the classical Writers by way of Study; and to some valuable *Eng-lish* Historian by way of Amusement. Such an Amusement is infinitely preferable to *Novels* or *Roman-ces*; and will not only relax your Attention; but enrich your Mind.

Eug. I thank You, good Sir; for your Admonition. And, if You please, I will now begin the Study, You recommend. Your Explanation of these Drawings, shall be the Rudiments of my Knowledge. And I shall think it a Happiness, to receive my first Instructions, from so able a Master.

Assp. It is Honour enough for *me, Eugenio*, to have given You the Hint. I only point out your Game; or spring the Covey; You shall be taught by a more expert Proficient, to make it your own. Yet, though Others may direct You with greater Skill, None will rejoice in your successful Pursuit, more sincerely than myself.

This is our renowned *Henry the Fifth*; as He appeared after the Victory of *Agincourt*. You see the gallant Conqueror clad in Steel, and recent from the Slaughter of the insulting Foe. He seems to breathe an heroic Ardour, which is sweetened and exalted by a lively Devotion.—He that, a little while ago, drove the Battle, like a Whirlwind, on the Legions of *France*; now, bends a suppliant Knee, and offers the eucharistic Hymn, to the LORD GOD of Hosts. No turbulent or disorderly Joy riots among the Soldiery. They express not the Triumph of their Hearts, in frantic Exultations; or drunken Revels; but in Acts of Thanksgiving to JEHOVAH. In an Attitude, that speaks the Psalmist's devout Acknowledgment;

knowledgment; *Not unto Us, O LORD, not unto Us, but unto thy Name be the Glory.*

This last Instance informs my *Eugenio*, That *Prayer* is an honourable Employ — has been practised by Persons of the most admired Endowments — is the surest Method of obtaining *Success*, in whatever Business We undertake; and of enjoying *Prosperity*, in whatever Circumstances We are placed.

The next Piece is different from all the preceding. In *those*, Armies with their Banners displayed, Ships of War riding at Anchor, battering Engines and Instruments of Death, form the Perspective. In *this*, We have, all around, a lovely rural Land scape; expressive of Peace, and enriched with Plenty. Corn and Cattle in the Valleys; fruitful Vineyards on the Hills; and beautiful Gardens surrounding the Houses. — But who is that *graceful* and *august* Personage, seated on a stately Throne of Ivory and Gold?

Eug. This is *Solomon*, giving his first Audience to the Queen of *Sheba*. A large Train of her Attendants throng the Avenues of the Palace. Some leading foreign Animals: Some, bearing Vases and Caskets: All, arrayed in strange Apparel. The *Israelites* gaze upon their outlandish Visitants, their costly Presents, and peculiar Manners. Their Visitants are as much surpris'd at the Walls, the Towers, and especially the Temple of *Jerusalem*. But You, Sir, I apprehend, are most pleas'd with the venerable Person, that fills the Throne.

Asp. Indeed I am; and so is his royal Guest. — You see, in her Habit, her Retinue, her Deportment, a rude unpolish'd Kind of Grandeur. But

all in *Solomon* is so splendid, and at the same Time so elegant; displays such a Delicacy of Taste, and such a Magnificence of Spirit; that the *Sabean Queen* is overwhelmed with Amazement, and transported with Delight. Her Looks speak that emphatical Acknowledgment, recorded by the sacred Historian; *It was a true Report, that I heard in my own Land, of thy Acts, and of thy Wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not the Words, until I came, and mine Eyes had seen: and behold! the half was not told me: thy Wisdom and Prosperity exceed the Fame which I heard* *.

The Dome is of Cedar, the Pillars of Marble, on which are supported Curtains of Embroidery.—The Pillars shine with the most glossy Polish, and swell upon the Eye with the boldest Projections. The Curtains, pendent in large and easy Folds, seem not adhesive to the Canvass, but waving in the Air. The Throne is so exquisitely contrived, so richly ornamented, and so highly finished, as shews the Painter had in his Eye that remarkable Observation of Scripture: *There was not the like made in any Kingdom.*

If the Monarch was absent, We should desire no greater Entertainment, than to view the Beauties of the Apartment: but can hardly allow any Attention to the Edifice, when so graceful and so grand a Presence bespeaks our Regard. For I must own, there appears to me something peculiarly excellent in this Figure: a *Serenity* and *Dignity*, without any of that martial Air, which gives a Tincture of Ferocity to the Warrior: a *Sagacity* and *Penetration*, not to be equalled by the Wrinkles of Age, yet transparent through all the Bloom of Youth. Piety and Wisdom, the Love of GOD and the Grace of his SPIRIT,

give

* 1 Kings x. 6, 7.

give an Elevation to the Mind; a secret Charm to the Countenance; and something more than mortal to the whole Man. — I am apt to suspect, *Eugenio*, that You yourself are ready to adopt a new Favourite. That You now prefer *Solomon* even to *Scipio*; and had rather be like the “Beloved of the LORD,” than the Darling of *Rome*.

Eug. Every Thing in *Solomon* is so venerable and heavenly, that I am filled with Awe, rather than fired with Emulation. It is not for a Boy, to think of imitating such high Perfection!

Asp. Why not, my dear Sir? It was GOD who gave *Solomon* his superior Wisdom, and exalted Accomplishments. And GOD is the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever: as willing to hear, and as able to help You, as He was to hear and bless his Servant *Solomon*. — Neither let your Youth be a Discouragement. Out of the Mouth of very Babes and Sucklings, HE ordaineth Strength, and perfects Praise*. *Samuel* ministered in the Temple, when He was but a Child †. *Josiah*, while He was yet young, began to seek after the GOD of his Fathers ‡. *Timothy* was acquainted with the Holy Scriptures from his earliest Years §. And *Solomon* himself was none of the oldest, when He was favoured with that extraordinary Vision, and made that admirable Choice at *Gibeon* §. A Passage of Scripture, which I dare say, You have read; which I would recommend to your attentive Consideration; and which, I hope, You will take for the Model of your Conduct. — And if You, like that illustrious young Prince, desire a wise and understanding Heart,

more

* Psal. viii. 2. † 1 Sam. ii. 18. ‡ 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3. § 2 Tim. iii. 15. § 1 Kings iii. 5, 6, &c.

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more than the Affluence of Wealth, or the Distinctions of Honour: if You seek *Wisdom as Silver*, and search for Her as for hid Treasure: then shall You also understand the Fear of the LORD, and find the Knowledge of GOD*.

The next that occurs, presents Us with a View of the Sea; and a most tremendous View it is.

Eug. This is the Voyage related by the Evangelist; when our LORD sailed with his Disciples, and bid the Storm be still, and made the Ocean calm.

Asp. Then We may truly say, *A Greater than Solomon is Here!*—Give me Leave to hint, upon this Occasion, that every Picture of *CHRIST* must necessarily depreciate his glorious Person. Therefore You will never think, that a few Rays beaming round his sacred Head, can properly distinguish the SON of GOD, or express the Grace of his Offices, and the Divinity of his Nature. It is not to display the Perfections of the LORD *JESUS Himself*, but only to give Us an Idea of one of his Works, that the Pencil has been employed on this grand Subject.

You will also remember, that it was not the main Ocean, but the Lake of *Tiberias*, on which they sailed. However, the Painter is at Liberty, to make his Sea as large as He pleases, and his Storm as terrible as He can. Accordingly, He has collected all the Horrors of a Tempest. — Lightnings fire the Arch above; and Thunders, could Thunders have been painted, would have rocked the Ground below. Those flaming Bolts have smitten a huge Promontory, and tore its rugged Brow. See! the rocky Fragment is

turn-

* Prov. ii. 4, 5.

tumbling, with impetuous Bound, from Cliff to Cliff.
 —The Waters, lashed by furious Winds, heave and
 tofs their tumultuous Billows. Here, they rise in rol-
 ling Ridges; there, they rage in devouring Whirls.
 —Amidst these horrible Commotions, You behold a
Vessel in all the Extremity of *Distress*. Straining un-
 der the Blast, battered and half overwhelmed by the
 Surge, She can no longer maintain the unequal Con-
 flict; she yields to the resistless Flood; and begins,
 evidently begins to sink. — Perplexed, amazed, and
 at their Wit's End, the Disciples run to and fro.
 They shift the Tackling; lighten the Stowage;
 try every Expedient; and find, to their inexpressible
 Astonishment, every Expedient ineffectual.

We cast our Eye forward, and their divine MA-
 STER appears, sedately rising from a gentle Slum-
 ber. He sees the Perplexity and Horror of his Com-
 panions, without the least Emotion of Alarm. He sees
 Destruction approaching, Heaven and Earth mingling,
 and instead of being dismayed, *enjoys* the elemental
 War.—What Composure in his Mien! What Dig-
 nity in his Attitude! What Majesty, sweetened with
 Compassion, in his Aspect! Such as could arise from
 no other Cause, but a conscious and undoubted Cer-
 tainty, that not a Soul of the Crew should be lost;
 not a Hair of their Head perish; and that all this
 mighty Uproar of Nature, should end in a Demon-
 stration of his *mightier* Power, and a Confirmation
 of his Disciples *Faith*. — He looks abroad into the
 mutinous Sky, and the turbulent Deep. He waves,
 with an authoritative Air, his sacred Hand; and adds
 the great commanding Word, PEACE: BE STILL.
 —Do

—Do You inquire after the Effect? Let *Milton* declare it;

*Confusion heard his Voice, and wild Uproar
Stood rul'd.*

This is expressed in another Draught. Where all is hushed: the tremendous Agitations cease, and the most profound Tranquillity takes Place. The Water is smooth as Glass; We have the Picture of a perfect *Calm*; and view those very Persons, who, a little while ago, were in the wildest Distraction, and in the very Jaws of Ruin, surrounding their LORD as Men alive from the Dead*. Their Consternation is

* The Circumstances of this Miracle, as related by the Evangelists, are truly wonderful, and to the last Degree picturesque.

Master! Master! We perish! How concise, how abrupt, and how ardent is this Exclamation! Therefore how strongly significant of imminent Danger, and of the utmost Distress! They have not Time to be explicit. A Moment's Delay may be fatal. What they utter is Conciseness itself, and all Rapidity. — This is Nature: this is the *genuine* Language of the Heart: this is true historic Painting. Every impartial Reader must admire this exquisitely just and fine Stroke, far beyond the diffuse and (I had almost said, *impertinently*) florid Speech, which *Virgil* puts into the Mouth of his Hero on a like Occasion. *Æn.* I. 98.

Σιωπή, ἡσυχία. What a Majesty in this Command! 'Tis admirable: 'tis inimitable: 'tis worthy of GOD. — I think, We may observe a peculiarly proper Word, addressed and adapted to each Element: the first injoining a *Cessation* of the *Winds*, the second a *Quiescence* of the *Waves*: Silence in all that roared, Composure in all that raged. As though (to give a short Paraphrase on the grand Injunction) it had been said; *Winds, be hush'd; Waves, be calm.*

The

is turned into Wonder, and their Pangs of Fear into Extasies of Joy. They acknowledge the Omnipotence, and adore the Goodness of *JESUS*.

Eug. Well may they acknowledge his *Omnipotence*; since *Winds and Waves obey Him*. Great Reason have they to adore his *Goodness*, since He rescued them from the very Jaws of Death; that worst of Deaths, perishing in the stormy Deep.

Ass. If *JESUS CHRIST* had vouchsafed such a Deliverance to my *Eugenio*; What would He have thought, or how would He have been affected?

Eug. I should have thought myself *inexpressibly* obliged; and that I could never shew *sufficient* Gratitude to so great a Benefactor.

Ass. Assure yourself then, my dear Sir, that He has done infinitely more for You.—He has delivered You, not indeed from being swallowed up by the raging Billows, but from sinking into the Pit of everlasting Perdition.—He has not only rescued You from endless Destruction, but obtained eternal Life and heavenly Happiness for You.—This He has done, not by speaking a Word, or issuing a Command; but by bearing your Guilt, suffering your Punishment, and dying the Death, the most ignominious and
tor-

The *Effect* on the Disciples is described, with all the Force of Imagination, and all the Energy of Diction. To represent in Colours, what the evangelical Historian has left upon Record, would be a Subject fit for the immortal *Raphael*; and perhaps not to be equalled even by his masterly Pencil. *Ἦσαν αὐτοὶ ἐκστατικοὶ ὡς θαυμαστοί*—*θαυμαστοί*, they were amazed—*ἐκστατικοί*, they were transported with Amazement—*ἡσαν*, to the very greatest Degree—*αὐτοὶ*, exceeding all that Language can express. *Mark vi. 51.*

tormenting Death, in your Stead.—Should You not then *unfeignedly* love HIM? *Study* to please HIM? and make it the *reigning* Endeavour of your Life to glorify HIM?

Here, *Theron* returned, and the young Student withdrew; after receiving some affectionate and encouraging Compliments from *Aspasio*. Who was going to enlarge upon the excellent Taste of his Friend; the instructive Stile of his Pictures; the good Sense and great Proficiency of his Son. But *Theron*, far from coveting the Praise, and fully satisfied with the Consciousness, of acting the becoming Part, prevented his Discourse, by stepping to a Pair of Glass Folding-Doors: which, thrown open, admitted them into the *Study*.

A Chimney-Piece of grey Marble, with plain, but bold and protuberant Mouldings, formed a very handsome Appearance.—In various little Niches, were fixed elegant *Busts*; and on the several Interstices, hung beautiful *Prints*; representing many of the most eminently learned Men, who were the Ornaments and Blessings, both of antient and modern Times. The Shelves, all around, were accommodated, not encumbered with Books. *Aspasio*, running over the letter'd Backs, observed a Collection of the most valuable Authors, in History and Natural Philosophy, in Poetry and Divinity.

You will easily perceive, said *Theron*, that I am somewhat singular in furnishing my Study, as well as in ornamenting the Avenue. My Books are not for Shew, but Use; and claim a Regard, rather on Account

count of their Worth, than their Number.—An immense Multitude of Volumes, I have always thought, is more likely to embarrass the Attention, than to improve the Understanding. A *huge* Library seems to resemble a perplexing *Labyrinth*; and often bewilders the Mind, instead of leading it expeditiously to the Acquisition of Truth.

When People are eager to peruse a Multiplicity of Writings, it frequently happens, that in reading all, they digest none *. They taste some empty and transient Amusement, but collect no solid or lasting Advantage. Their Minds are somewhat like those capacious Looking-Glasses, which We have seen exposed in the most frequented and populous Streets of *London*. They receive all Manner of shadowy Images, but no substantial Impression. A thousand Figures *pass through* them, not one *abides* in them.

Our Books, replied *Aspasio*, as well as our Friends, should rather be *select*, than *numerous*. For my Part, I would desire no more than two or three of the most correct and masterly Writers in any Science. These, a Person of moderate Capacity may be able to comprehend; and not comprehend only, but enrich his Memory with the choicest Sentiments, and make

* The Author of *Night-Thoughts* has touched this Subject, with great Judgment, and equal Sprightliness.

*Voracious Learning, often overfed,
 Digests not into Sense the motley Meal.
 This Forager on Osier's Wisdom, leaves
 Her native Farm, her Reason quite untill'd.
 With mixt Manure She surfeits the rank Soil,
 Dung'd but not dress'd; and rich to Beggary.*

make the Substance of their Works his own.—He will, by Repetition and familiar Converse, enter into their *Spirit*, and acquire their *Manner*. While a Rambler in reading, does little more than gratify his Fancy, without refining his Taste, or amending his Heart.

Upon this *Aspasio* turned Himself; and espied, in one Corner of the Apartment, the *celestial* and *terrestrial Globes*; in another, a large reflecting *Telescope*; and on the Top of a Buroe, one or two of the best *Microscopes*.

These Instruments, resumed *Theron*, have opened an inexhaustible Fund of the finest Entertainments*. They have furnished Us with *new Eyes*; and brought up, I may venture to say, a *new World* into our View.

* Gentlemen of Taste and Seriousness cannot, I think, have a nobler Piece of Furniture for their Studies, than the *Microscope* and the *Telescope*, the *Orrery* and the *Air-Pump*. This Apparatus would afford them a most delightful and improving Amusement in a solitary Hour.—It would also give them an Opportunity of entertaining their Company, in a truly elegant and very instructive Manner. It would open a fine and ample Field, for displaying the Glories of GOD the CREATOR, and of GOD the REDEEMER.—As the Discoveries made by these Instruments, are so *surprising* in themselves, and *new* to the Generality of Mankind, every edifying Hint deduced from *such* Observations, would come with a peculiar Recommendation.—This, I am sure, would be a Method of reducing to Practice, what the polite Historian has recorded of the politer *Scipio*; *Elegantissimo Intervalla Negotiorum Otio dispuxit*. Vell. Patere.—And, I believe, it might be a happy Means of tuning the Soul, to bear a Part in that immortal Hymn; *Worthy art Thou, O LORD, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power; for Thou hast created all Things; and for thy Pleasure they now exist, and were at first created.*

REV. iv. 11.

View. They give Us a Sight of Wonders, that may seem incredible to the incurious Vulgar, and were utterly unknown to the most inquisitive Sages of Antiquity. They charm the Eye with a Display of inimitable Beauties, where nothing worthy of Notice was expected. They throw the Mind into a pleasing Transport of Admiration; and from the meanest lowest Objects, raise the most *amiable* and *exalted* Ideas of the all-glorious CREATOR.

I have often regretted, that such rational and manly Gratifications should be almost universally supplanted, by the *fantastical* and *childish* Amusements in Vogue. Why should not the Contemplation of Nature's surprising Novelties, be as acceptable an Entertainment, as the stale Diversion of *Quadrille*; be as refined an Employ for a leisure Hour, as to count the Spots on a Pack of Cards?—The Ladies, I am very sure, might find brighter Colours, and more delicate Ornaments, in the Robes and Head-Dress of a common *Fly*; than ever they found amidst the Trinkets of a *Toy-Shop*. And was the fair Circle of Females once acquainted with the radiant Varnish and rich Studs, that enamel the Cover of a *Beetle's* Wing; I am apt to think, they would view with less Rapture, with more Indifference, perhaps, with a becoming Disdain, all the pretty Fancies of a *Beaux's* Wardrobe.

A few Days ago, when the accomplished *Mamie* favoured Us with a Visit, I shewed Her, through a magnifying Glass, the Sting of a Bee, the Scale of a Soal, the Wing of a Gnat, and some other *beautiful Minims* of Nature; together with the Powder, which adheres to our Finger, when We touch the

Body of a Moth.—“Surprising! cried the young
 “Lady. What elegant Figures! What enchanting
 “Finery*! — How perfect the Polish, and how
 “high the Finishing, of that *little Weapon!*—This
 “Piece of *defensive Armour*, how skilfully contrived,
 “and how curiously wrought! Here, rising into lit-
 “tle Ridges, like the Bosses of a Buckler; fitted to
 “repel Injuries. There, scooped into little Cavi-
 “ties, designed, I suppose, to diminish its Weight;
 “that the Coat of Mail may not incumber, even
 “while it defends, the puny Wearer.—What I
 “took to be a whitish despicable Rag, is the *neatest*
 “*Fan*, I ever beheld. Mounted on Sticks † inimi-
 “tably tapering and slender. Tinged with all the
 “soft and lovely Colours of the most glossy Mother
 “of Pearl.—But, what astonishes me more than
 “all, is the View of that *coloured Dust*; which
 “your Instrument has turned into a *Cluster of Fea-*
 “*thers*. Every one wrought off with a Regularity
 “and a Delicacy, that are beyond the Power of
 “Description. The finest Stroke drawn by the *Ita-*
 “*lian Pen*, compared with the extreme Minuteness
 “of the Shaft, is broad and bulky as an Admi-
 “ral’s Mast. A Speck of Leaf-Gold, could it be
 “weighed against the exquisite Attenuations of the
 “Vane,

————— *Smallest Lineaments exact,*
In all the Liveries deck’d of Summer’s Pride,
With Spots of Gold and Purple, Azure and Green.

Milton.

† These *Sticks*, are the little *Ribs*, which support, at proper Intervals, the fine transparent Membrane of the Wing.

"Vane", would be more substantial and ponderous
 "than yonder marble Slab.

"How nice, even to a Prodigy, must be the
 "Mechanism of the *animalcule* Race! I see Glo-
 "bules, I see Tides of Blood, rolling through Mæ-
 "anders inexpressibly finer, than the finest Hair.—
 "Stranger still! I see whole Sholes of active Crea-
 "tures, expatiating in a single Drop of Water †:
 "taking their Pastime amidst such a scanty Canal,
 "as untraiened and as much at large, as *Leviathan*
 "in the Abysses of the Ocean.—A whole King-
 "dom of these Creatures, though collected into a
 "Body, are quite undiscernable by the naked Eye.
 "What then must be the Size of every *Individual*?
 "Yet in every Individual there is a complete *System*
 "of Limbs; each endowed with spontaneous Mo-
 "tion; all assembled, yet not crouded, in a living
 "Atom.—To reflect upon the Texture of Vessels,

R 2

"and

* *Vane* is the feathery Part of a Quill.

† In a single Drop of Water, Dr. *Hook* is said to have
 discovered, with his *Microscope*, eight Millions two hun-
 dred and eighty thousand *Animalcules*.—This is mention-
 ed, because it is the prevailing Philosophy of the Age.
 Though I must confess, that Mr. *Gautier* seems to have
 gone a considerable Way, towards giving it another
 Turn. As He has proved, before a learned Assembly at
Paris, That the *Vermiculars* of *Lewenboeck*, and the liv-
 ing *Molecule* of Mr. *de Buffon*, were only Balls of Air
 agitated by the fermenting of the Seed. If so, it is not
 impossible, but Dr. *Hook's* *Animalcula* may be nothing
 more than Balls of Air, agitated by the fermenting of
 the Pepper.

Be this as it will, the young Lady's Remarks on the
 Wonders of *Mechanism* in the *animalcule* Creation, I be-
 lieve will never be controverted.

“ and the Operations of Organs, so complex, so
 “ numerous, yet so inconceivably minute; how it
 “ awakens Admiration! Fills me with Reverence
 “ of the ALMIGHTY MAKER! and yields
 “ a Pleasure, infinitely superior to all the modish
 “ Amusements of our Sex!—Your Discoveries of
 “ *Life in Miniature*, have given me a Disgust of,
 “ what is called *High Life*, and its solemn Fopp-
 “ ries. You have spoiled me, *Theron*, for a fash-
 “ ionable Trifler. I shall no longer relish the dull Oc-
 “ conomy of the Fan, or the poor Parade of the
 “ Snuff-Box.

Asp. Have You nothing to say of the *Telescope*?—
 I believe, it must be my Province to celebrate this
 admirable Invention; and I wish I could do it, with
Manilia's brilliant Imagination.—If the *Microscope*
 leads Us downward, to the curious Secrets of the
 animalcule Creation; the *Telescope* bears Us upward,
 to the grand Peculiarities of the starry Regions. The
 Eye, conducted by this wonderful Guide, visits a
 Variety of majestic Orbs, which would otherwise be
 lost in unmeasurable Tracts of *Æther*.—This, far
 more surprising than the Discoveries of *Columbus*, has
 found out new Colonies of Worlds, in every Quarter
 of the nocturnal Skies. This has placed a glittering
 Crescent, on the Brow of one * of the Planets; and
 has given others a most stately Train of Atten-
 dants †.

Tell

* The Planet *Venus*.

† The Satellites of *Jupiter* and *Saturn*.

Tell me, *Theron*; could You discern the full Choir of the Constellations, or distinguish the variegated Face of the Moon, without the Aid of your *telescopic* Tube? Could You, with your unassisted Eye, get a Sight of *Jupiter's* Satellites, or procure a Glimpse of *Saturn's* Ring?—Without that supplementary Aid to our Sight, they are quite imperceptible; though the Satellites of the former, are incomparably more magnificent, than the *Retinue* of all the Monarchs in the World; and compared with the Ring of the latter, all the *Bridges* on ten thousand Rivers; are less than the *Ferule* of your Cane.

As the *Telescope* to the Eye, so is *Revelation* to the Understanding. It discovers Truths, which, exclusive of such a Discovery, had been for ever hid from the most sagacious Minds.—'Tis strange to the unlearned Observer, that this ponderous Globe of Earth and Seas, should wheel its rapid Circuit round the Sun. But the *Telescope* has rendered this Fact clear to a Demonstration.—'Tis strange likewise to our natural Apprehensions, that We should die in *Adam*, and be undone by our first Parent's Disobedience. Nor less so, that We should be made alive in *CHRIST*, and derive our Recovery from his *imputed* Righteousness. But *Revelation* makes this Doctrine as certain, as it is comfortable.

Ther. Does *Revelation* make it certain?—This is a Point not yet established, but taken for granted. I rather apprehend, that *Revelation*, in no Place maintains it, in many Places disavows it.—Since your Absence, *Aspasio*, I have spent some Time in searching the Scriptures, with a particular View to this Tenet. And I can find no such Expression in

the whole Bible, as the Imputation of *CHRIST's* Righteousness. If it was so *leading* an Article, as You represent; surely, it could not have been intirely forgotten by the *inspired* Writers, nor utterly excluded from *their* Body of Divinity.

Ass. The very identical Expression may not occur, and yet the Doctrine be abundantly taught. I believe, You never met with the Word *Resurrection*, in any Part of the *Pentateuch*; nor ever read the Phrase *Satisfaction*, in all the New Testament. Yet our *LORD* fully proved the Truth of the *former*, from the Writings of *Moses*; and You Yourself have acknowledged the *latter*, to be the unanimous Sense of the Apostles and Evangelists.

In the Epistle to the *Romans*, We have express and repeated Mention of a Righteousness imputed. *What* or *whose* Righteousness, can be the Subject of this Assertion?—Not the Righteousness of *Angels*. They are a superior Class of Beings, and have no such intimate Connection with our Nature.—Not the Righteousness of eminent *Saints*. This is the exploded Error of Popery; and furnishes the *Romish* Zealots with that Chimera of Arrogance and Folly, Works of Supererogation.—Not any Righteousness of our own: for, it is positively declared, to be *without Works**; in which no Works of our own have any Concurrence, or the least Share.—What other Righteousness then can be meant, but the Righteousness of our great SUBSTITUTE, SURETY, and SAVIOUR? Who took our Nature; discharged our Debt; and is therefore stiled, *JEHOVAH our Righteousness*†.

Thes.
* Rom. iv. 6. † Jer. xxiii. 6.

Ther. This is contrary to the whole Tenour of the sacred Instructions. What says the Prophet? *When the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness that He hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, He shall save his Soul alive* *.—Here, that greatest of Blessings, the Salvation of the Soul, is ascribed to a *Departure from Evil*, and a *Perseverance in Good*: to a real Alteration in a Man's own Temper and Conduct, not to any fanciful Application of some transmissive Righteousness from Another.

Asp. The Text, I imagine, relates to a temporal Preservation, rather than a spiritual and eternal Salvation.—However, taking it in your own Sense, I would ask; Is there no Wickedness, but Riot and Debauchery, Profaneness and Injustice?—*Unbelief*, though it be not so much as noticed in our Systems of Ethics, is, in the Volume of Revelation, declared a capital Crime. Our LORD, speaking of the HOLY SPIRIT, mentions it as a signal Part of his Office, That *He shall convince the World of Sin*.—Of what Sin? Scandalous Violations of moral Rectitude? This were a needless Employ. The Light of Reason is sufficient to evince such a Charge; and the Court of Conscience is erected, to pass the deserved Sentence.—Of Sin, adds the HEAVENLY TEACHER, *because they believe not on me* †: on my Death, as the Cause of their Forgiveness; on my Righteousness, as the Ground of their Acceptance; on my SPIRIT, as the powerful Principle of their Holiness.

Unbelief treats GOD as a Liar; because, it rejects the Testimony, which He has bore concerning

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his

his beloved SON.—Unbelief tramples on the Blood of *CHRIST*, and is a most contemptuous Affront to all his saving Offices.—Unbelief would counteract the Operations of the *HOLY GHOST*; whose peculiar Work it is, to testify of *CHRIST*, and make manifest his Righteousness. Unbelief instigates (could We have thought it possible?) a Child of Dust, a Slave of Sin, to idolize Himself and his own Performances.—To say all in a Word; Unbelief is that *grand*, that *comprehensive* Sin, which scornfully rejects, or impiously renounces, the most glorious Method of Salvation, which Omniscience itself could devise.

A Sinner, therefore, never turns from his Wickedness; till He turns, by a true Faith to *JESUS CHRIST*. Till then, He is a Rebel against the Gospel. So flagrant a Rebel, that He stands particularly excepted, in the Act of Evangelical Indemnity. For, as *He that believeth on the SON, hath everlasting Life*; so, *He that believeth not, is condemned already, and the Wrath of GOD abideth on him* *.

Ther. What are the Psalmist's Sentiments on this Subject? Does not He represent the Matter in a very different

* *John* iii. 18, 36. The Words are exceedingly emphatical, and no less awful.—Not barely He *shall* come into Condemnation, but He (that believeth not) *is* condemned already. Though ever so specious or refined in his outward Conversation, He lies under a Sentence of Death, and is the Object of divine Wrath.—Which not only will *visit* Him, but *abideth* on Him. So that, where-ever He may be; whatever He may do, the Displeasure of the tremendous *JEHOVAH* hangs over Him, like a dreadful destructive Sword; and, if He dies in such a Condition, will inevitably fall upon him, and cut him in Pieces eternally.

different Light? *Thou LORD art merciful; for Thou rewardest every Man according to his, not Another's Works*.*.

Asp. Noble Saying! May it be written upon our very Hearts!—GOD is merciful, and therefore rewardeth. From whence it appears, that what We call a *Reward*, is really an Act of *Mercy*, rather than of *Justice*. The *Wages* of Sin is Death; but the *Gift* (says the Apostle, altering his Style, and making a most important Distinction) the *Gift* of GOD is eternal Life †.—The inspired Penman subjoins, not for, but according to, every Man's Works. His Works are the Measure, not the meritorious Cause. To merit, is the sole Prerogative of the SAVIOUR. To Him it is owing, that our imperfect Services are honoured with any Acceptance; much more that they are recompensed with any Reward.

Ther. Does not this Exposition of yours, clash with that truly generous Acknowledgment of St. *Peter*? *In every Nation, He that feareth GOD, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with Him* ‡. Here, it is undeniably evident, that Acceptance with our CREATOR, is founded on a Man's own Piety, and personal Integrity.

Asp. Rightly to understand this Text, We should inquire into the Circumstances of the History,—The Apostle had been strongly and most unreasonably prejudiced in Favour of the *Jews*; imagining, that the Salvation of CHRIST, like the Dispensation of *Moses*, must be confined to his Countrymen.—But now, having considered the Purport of his late heavenly Vision; having compared it with the angelic Message,

* Psal. lxij. 12.

† Rom. vi. 23.

‡ Acts x. 35.

sage, delivered to *Cornelius*; and being made acquainted with the Character of that valuable Man, He breaks out into this truly catholic Declaration.—

“ My Prejudices are vanished. My Sentiments are enlarged. — From the Instance before me, it is demonstrably certain; that GOD does not appropriate the Blessings of his Covenant, to any particular Person, Family, or People. But, in every Nation, He that feareth Him, and from a Principle of Religion in the Heart, worketh Righteousness in the Life, is accepted; so accepted, as to be an Object of the divine Favour, and an Inheritor of eternal Happiness.”

This, I think, is the exact Meaning of the Place. And let it be recollected, that no One truly fears, or can possibly please GOD, without Faith*. For which Reason, it seems necessary to suppose, that *Cornelius*, though a Heathen by Birth, had believed through Grace.—Nay; it is evident from the Context, that he had heard of *JESUS CHRIST*; had some Acquaintance with the Design of his coming, and the Execution of his Office†; enough to be the Ground of a *real*, though perhaps an *infantile* Faith. The Business of the Apostle was, to lead this Convert into the *clear* Light, and *full* Privileges of the Gospel; to ratify and confirm his Title to them, by the sacred

Seal

Heb. xi. 6.

† See *ver.* 36, 37. Indeed it could hardly be otherwise; since *Cornelius* was settled at *Cæsarea*, the Residence of the Lord-Lieutenant; and Seat of the Civil, as *Jerusalem* was of the Ecclesiastical Government. In a Place of such general Resort, so very remarkable an Event could not but be known. Especially, as *Philip* the Evangelist had fixed his Abode in that City. See *Acts* viii. 40.

Seal of Baptism; and introduce Him, as the *First-Fruits* of the Gentiles, into the Christian Church.

— So that nothing can be concluded from this Passage, but that the glad Tidings of *Christianity* are for *Jews*, for *Gentiles*, for all People — that Faith, even when weak, is productive of good Works — and, when sincerely improved, will certainly be increased; will go from *Strength to Strength*.

Ther. Does not our SAVIOUR, in describing the Process, and foretelling the Issue of the last decisive Tryal, assign a Kingdom to the Righteous? Assign it, in this precise View, as a proper Remuneration of *their own* good Works; Saying, in the most express Terms; *Come, ye blessed of my FATHER, inherit the Kingdom prepared for You, from the Foundation of the World: FOR I was an hungred, and Ye gave me Meat; FOR &c. FOR &c.**

Ass. Be pleased to take Notice of the Expression. They are bidden to *inherit*: and what is freer than an Inheritance? — Observe also the *Reason* alledged, and compare it with the Rule of Judicature. *He that believeth, saith the SUPREME JUDGE, shall be saved.* This is the avowed, the invariable Standard, by which He proceeds, in administering everlasting Judgment. Accordingly, He confers eternal Life on the Righteous, as Persons intitled to this great Felicity, on the Foot of his own gracious Appointment.

For denotes, not the *Foundation*, but the *Evidence*, of their Right. “ I acquit such a Person, says the “ Arbitrator in a judicial Claim; *for* the Witnesses “ depose,

* Matt. xxv. 30.

“ depose, that the Debt is paid.” The Deposition, which answers to these righteous Acts, is the *Proof*; Payment of the Debt, which corresponds with *CHRIST*’s perfect Obedience, is the *Cause* * of the Discharge.—*For Ye have given*; Ye have abounded in all Instances of Duty to me, and Love to your Brethren; and thereby have manifested Yourselves true Believers.

It may be farther observed, That our LORD says not, Ye have done it to your Fellow-creatures, but *to these my Brethren* †. He commends not every random Act of Good-nature or Generosity, but such Kinds of Beneficence only, as carry the *Christian* Stamp; were exercised to a Disciple, *in the Name of a Disciple*. These most evidently proceed from Faith, and undeniably attest its Sincerity.

Ther. Are not these Distinctions more *subtle*, than *solid*?

Asp. To me they appear in no such Light. If You think otherwise, let Us appeal to those excellent Persons themselves. The Turn, the very remarkable Turn of their Sentiments, will fully decide our Question.—Do they lay *any Stress* upon their own religious Duties, and beneficent Deeds? Far from relying on them, farther still from pleading them, they bestow not a *single Thought* upon them. Having fixed their Hopes on the Rock of Ages, they forget these transient

* The Spring is come, says the Countryman; for the Orchard blooms, and the Black-Bird sings. The Blooming of the Trees, and the Melody of the Birds, were never supposed to *create*, only to *characterize*, the delightful Season. They are, not its *Cause*, but the *Proof* of its taking Place.

† Matt. xxv. 40.

transient Bubbles*. They wonder, That their exalted MASTER should condescend, to make any honourable mention of such imperfect Services.—O! that We may be enabled, through the whole Course of our Lives, to follow the Example of their Piety; and, when We stand before the tremendous Tribunal, to imitate their Humility and Wisdom! *Their Humility*; in renouncing themselves, and disclaiming all Desert of their own. *Their Wisdom*; in reposing their whole Confidence on the Merits and Righteousness of their REDEEMER.

Ther. Our LORD makes no mention of this Doctrine, in his Sermon on the Mount. Whereas, if it had been so *very material*, He would at least have touched upon it, in that comprehensive Summary of true Religion.

Ass. Our LORD says not a Word, concerning the Sacrifice of his Death. Neither is there a Syllable, relating to his Intercession for Transgressors. But are these Articles of our *Faith* to be deemed fictitious or superfluous? Because, they are not expressly inculcated, in that admirable Treatise of *practical* Divinity.

However, upon a more attentive Examination, perhaps, We shall find the Point most strongly *implied*, though not distinctly *specified*; its Necessity demonstrated, though its Nature be not explained.

—The

* *Bubbles* they are, compared with the all-glorious Obedience of CHRIST; or considered in reference to the grand Affair of Justification before GOD.—But as Bubbles, or watery Vesicles inflated with Air, are the Means of exhibiting the beautiful Colours of the *Rain-bow*; so these Services, though poor and defective, bear *Testimony* to the Existence of that precious Grace—*Faith*.

—The illustrious TEACHER opened his Mouth, and with a peculiar Solemnity said; *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit* *. — But *Who* are they? Not the Persons, who sooth themselves with the flattering Conceit of the *Laodicean Church*; *I am rich in Obedience, and increased in spiritual Goods* †. Those rather, who see their Indigence; bewail their Guilt; and hunger and thirst after the justifying Merit of a REDEEMER. Who, from the very Bottom of an humbled Heart, confess; “LORD, I am no more able to conform all my Conduct, to thy most holy Law, than I am capable of atoning for my innumerable Sins. CHRIST must be my Righteousness, as well as my Propitiation, or else I am irrecoverably undone.”

The inimitable PREACHER farther assures his Hearers; That, *unless their Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven* ‡. — How must *Christians* exceed the *Pharisees*? Not only in being *sincere*; in having Respect unto all GOD's Commandments; but also in possessing a *complete* Righteousness. Such as the divine Holiness can, with Complacency, accept; and in which the divine Justice may, with Honour, acquiesce. Nor can this be any Thing less, than the perfect Obedience of the great MEDIATOR. — St. Paul's memorable Testimony, concerning his Attainments in the *Pharisaical*, and his Hopes in the *Christian State* ||, afford the very best Comment upon this important Declaration of our LORD.

Ther.

* Matt. v. 3. † Rev. iii. 17. ‡ Matt. v. 20.
|| Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9.

Ther. The ORACLE of Heaven, You know, was once consulted upon that most momentous of all Questions ; How a Person may ascertain his Title to Life and Immortality ? And what is the Tenour of the sacred Rescript ?—We are referred to the Ten Commandments ; and, in the most explicit Terms, with the most peremptory Air, told ; *This do, and thou shalt live* *.

Asp. That particular Person, if You please, was referred to the ten Commandments ; not *We*, and Mankind in general. — Our LORD, in the preceding Verses, had been informing his Disciples ; That they must *receive the Kingdom of GOD*, or the Grace of the Gospel, and the Blessings it proposes, *as a little Child*. And this can hardly signify, in Consequence of their own Doings.

Ther. That particular Person referred ! not *We* and Mankind in general !—I don't understand your Meaning, *Aspasio*.

Asp. You will observe then, that our LORD's Reply was not an universal Direction, but an Answer *Ad Hominem* ; adapted to the Application of the young Gentleman †. — Instead of asking ; “ How shall

* Mark x. 17. Luke x. 28. xviii. 18.

† It is delightful to observe the Wisdom of our LORD : how exactly this *divine Casuist* suits his Counsel to the various States of Mankind. — The Secure and Presumptuous He sends to the *Law*, that they may be *humbled*. To the Contrite and Penitent He preaches the *Gospel*, that they may be *comforted*. — When the *Pharisee*, full of Self-conceit stands up and says, *What shall I do ?* The Answer is, *Do all that is commanded*. When the *broken-hearted Woman* falls at his Feet, and speaks in Tears the Guilt of her Life, and the Anguish of her Soul ; *thy Sins are forgiven*, is the gracious Reply.

“ shall a *poor guilty* Mortal, who is every Day of-
 “ sending, obtain Forgiveness from the righteous
 “ GOD?” Instead of saying; “ How shall I,
 “ who am not able to think a *good Thought*, make
 “ sure my Title to an eternal Weight of Glory?”
 Our Querist demands; *What good Thing shall I do,*
that I may inherit eternal Life? The Reply proceeds
 upon the Inquirer’s own Principles. *If You expect*
Salvation upon such legal Terms, know, that your
 Obedience must be nothing less, than a *perfect* Con-
 formity to the divine Law. Perform all its Precepts,
 in their utmost Extent, in their exactest Purity, and
 with an unremitted Perseverance, then — But alas!
 such Perfection is too high for fallen Creatures; they
 cannot attain unto it. Necessarily, therefore, must
 they drop all such Pretensions, and have recourse to
 some other Method of Justification.

Ther. Why did that “ WONDERFUL
 “ COUNSELLOR,” if such was the Purport
 of his Answer, express Himself so obscurely? Why
 did He not divert his promising Scholar from this
 fruitless Attempt; and put Him in the right, the
 practicable Way of obtaining Salvation?

Asp. This He did, with the finest Address, and in
 the most skilful Manner.—Had our LORD plainly
 affirmed, “ You are worldly; You are covetous;
 “ your Riches are your GOD:” such a Charge
 would, in all Probability, have been as confidently
 denied, as it was plainly urged. Therefore He brings
 this specious Hypocrite to a *Test* *, which could not
 be evaded, and which was sure to discover the Truth.
 A Test, which laid open the palpable and enormous
 Defects

* Luke xviii. 22.

Defects of his so much boasted Obedience. Which made it appear, that, instead of keeping *all* the Commandments, this vain Self-justiciary had not obeyed the very *first*. But, amidst all his towering Imaginations of Himself, had been, and at that very Instant was, a fordid groveling Idolater: who preferred his transitory Possessions on Earth, to an incorruptible Inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven*. — Could any Expedient be more suitable to the Case? Or better calculated to reduce Him, intoxicated as He was with Pride, to a sober humble Mind? To beat Him off from his false Foundation, *the Righteousness which is of the Law*; and lead Him to a Reliance on the promised, the expected, the present MESSIAH?

It puts me in mind of my Friend *Sagacio's* Conduct. Which seems to have some Conformity with our LORD's Procedure; and may, possibly, tend to illustrate its Propriety. — Visiting one of his unlearned Neighbours, He found Him in company with a certain talkative Stranger; who was haranguing, at an *extravagant* Rate, on the Wonders of Astronomy. — *Sagacio* soon perceived, that the chief Furniture of this extraordinary Adept, lay in a little Acquaintance with the technical Terms, and somewhat more than a little Share of Assurance. How should He bring the self-plumed Sciolist to a little *Modesty* of Sentiment, and *Decorum* of Conversation? He took Leave to ask, "What the Word *Astronomy* might signify?" The Orator was struck dumb in a Moment. He had never informed Himself, it seems, that Astronomy related to the Order

and Regulation of the Stars. This single Question taught our minute Philosopher, more effectually than twenty Lectures on the Subject. It taught Him his *own Ignorance*; and that He had the very Rudiments of his so much admired Science still to learn.

Ther. What will You say to those famous Passages in the Epistle of St. James? *By Works a Man is justified. Was not Abraham our Father justified by Works* *? Can any Words be plainer in their Meaning? Or, can any Meaning be more directly opposite to the whole Scope of your Argumentation?

Asp. This I would say, *Theron*. — The Passages You quote, when detached from the Context, may seem inconsistent with the Declarations of another Apostle. As a Limb, when *wrenched* from its natural Situation, appears with an Air of Disproportion. Whereas, reduce the dislocated Part, and it will recover the Symmetry of its Shape; it will harmonize exactly with the animal System. — Replace likewise these Assertions; consider them in *Connection* with the whole Paragraph; and they will be found, if not Unisons, yet perfect Concords, with the Strain of St. Paul's Teaching.

What is the Point, which St. James undertakes to illustrate? — To distinguish a genuine from an insincere Faith. *If a Man say, He hath Faith*; this is the Boast of some hypocritical Professor. So that the Apostle is evidently dealing with a *Pretender* to the precious Gift: and therefore replies, *Shew me thy Faith*: Prove the Reality of thy Claim: Prove it

* Jam. ii. 21, 24.

to me and to the Church, to thy Fellow-creatures and Fellow-*christians*. If unproductive of righteous Works, We must pronounce it spurious, worthless, dead.

Having detected the *Counterfeit*, He proceeds to describe the *Sterling*. The grand Characteristic of which is, A Frame of Mind and a Course of Action, corresponding with the Doctrine believed. By this Touchstone the Faith of our renowned Progenitor was tried; and, being tried, was “found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory.” Was not Abraham our Father justified by Works? — Justified! How? As to Acceptance with the SUPREME JUDGE? No: this was effected, long before the Patriarch offered up Isaac. But when He exercised that Heroic Act of Self-Denial, Resignation, and Obedience; then his Justification was evidenced, to all his Cotemporaries; and to all Generations. His Faith was made perfect*; answered its proper End; and appeared to be of the true, the triumphant, the scriptural Kind; since it overcame the World, overcame Self, and regarded GOD as All in All.

Upon the whole; St. Paul speaks concerning the Justification of our Persons; St. James concerning the Justification of our Faith†. — St. Paul describes

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* *Evidently*. In this Sense, I suppose, We are to understand St. John's Aphorism. *He that doeth Righteousness, is righteous*: manifests the Truth of his Conversion, and justifies his Profession from all Suspicion of Insincerity. 1 John iii. 7.

† That the Expression used by St. James, signifies this declarative Justification, is plain from 1 Tim. iii. 16. Where the Apostle, speaking of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, says; *Who was justified in or by the SPIRIT*:

the *Manner* of being justified, before the *all-seeing* GOD; St. *James* points out the *Proof* * of a justified State, as it is visible to Men. — The former proceeds from the immaculate Righteousness of *CHRIST*, placed to our Account; the latter consists in the Fruits of Righteousness, adorning our Life. — Rightly understood, therefore, these Passages are not in the least contradictory to the Epistles of St. *Paul*, or to the Scope of my Argumentation. But are a seasonable Caveat and a proper Preservative, against misunderstanding *those*, or perverting *this*.

Ther. I wish, you would read that concise, but judicious Abridgment of true Religion, comprised in the fifteenth *Psalms*. The sacred Penman sets out with this Inquiry; *LORD, who shall dwell in thy Tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy holy Hill?* To this most interesting Query the following Verses are a full and satisfactory Answer. The whole of which turns upon the Discharge of moral Duties; *walking uprightly, and working Righteousness*. Without a Syl-

lable,

SPIRIT: declared to be the true SON of GOD; manifested on Earth, and recognized from Heaven, as the undoubted SAVIOUR of the World.

* A very little Reflection, I should imagine, must convince every unprejudiced Reader; That St. *James* cannot possibly be stating the Method of Justification, before the infinitely righteous GOD. Because, He never so much as mentions the Death of *CHRIST* — *Who made his Soul an Offering for Sin—to whom give all the Prophets Witness, that whosoever believeth in Him, shall receive Remission of Sins—and besides whom, there is no other Name given under Heaven, whereby We can be saved*—Could an Apostle so absolutely forget his LORD; and in a Case, where every other inspired Writer acknowledges Him; nay, acknowledges Him to be ALL IN ALL?

table, or a single Hint, concerning the very superior Excellence of Faith, or the extreme Necessity of a vicarious Obedience.

Ass. I have often read, and I well remember, that beautiful, that instructive *Psaln*. And I beg leave to observe, once for all, with relation to such Passages of the Old Testament; That they suppose the Persons, whom they describe, to be convinced of their *natural Corruption*; to be humbled under a Sense of their *actual Guilt*; and to live in a conscientious Observance of the *expiatory Sacrifices*. All which had an invariable Reference to *CHRIST*, and derived their whole Virtue from his Mediation.

Would any of the *Jewish Saints*, think you, have dared to advance a Plea for eternal Blessedness, upon the Foot of their own Conformity to such *moral Directions*? Neglecting, at the same Time, the annual Ordinance of the Passover, the Sacrifices of the three great Festivals, or a believing Improvement of the daily Oblation. — By no means. They were, and they would acknowledge themselves, deplorably defective. They would plead the Promise of free Grace, and fly to the Blood, which *GOD* himself had appointed *to make an Atonement for their Souls*. — By such Sentiments and such a Conduct, they reduced to Practice the very Essence of our Doctrine: disavowing their own Deeds, however virtuous or religious; and trusting in the Strength of *Israel*, the *LORD our Righteousness*. Who alone fulfilled all the Precepts, contained in this excellent Formulary of Duty. Who was also the *Substance* of every purifying and every propitiatory Rite.

Ther. Has not the sacred Writer expressly said, at the Close of the *Psalm*? *Whoſe DOETH theſe Things, ſhall never fall.*

Aſp. He has: And this, I apprehend, is his Meaning. — “Persons of ſuch a Temper, and ſuch a Practice, bear the Marks of GOD’s Children, and are meet for his Glory. Accordingly, they ſhall never fall, either into total Apoſtacy *HERE*, or final Condemnation *HEREAFTER*. They are now Heirs, and in due Time ſhall be Poſſeſſors, of his eternal Kingdom.”

But you will take Notice, that all theſe Duties and Qualifications, only *characterize*, not *conſtitute*, the Inheritor of Heaven. — You will likewise advert to another very remarkable Circumſtance in his Character; *He ſetteth not by Himſelf, but is lowly in his own Eyes* *. Or, as the lively Original ſpeaks, *He is baſe and vile in his own Sight*. So far from aſpiring to *Self-juſtification*, that He abſolutely renounces it; and falls down, in deep Abaſement, at the Foot of infinitely rich Grace.

Ther.

* *Psalm* xv. 4. נְבוֹזָה בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָם. I cannot ſay, that I admire the Bible Tranſlation of this Clause: *In whoſe Eyes the vile Perſon is contemptible*. Methinks, it does not favour of the tender and benign Spirit of our Religion, which teaches Us to *honour all Men*; to deſpiſe no one’s Perſon, but only to abhor the *Wickedneſs* of the Wicked.

Should the Senſe I have oppoſed, have its Weight; the Senſe I have preferred, is incomparably *weightier*. If, to deſpiſe the Vile, is a religious Act; to think meanly of Ourſelves, is a much more advanced, and a far more difficult Inſtance of Religion. This is to copy the higheſt Pattern of human Excellence; who, notwithſtanding his very ſuperior Attainments, accounted *Himſelf leſs than the leaſt of all Saints*; nay, *the very chiefeſt of Sinners*.

Ther. I cannot but think, it is the *current Doctrine* of Scripture, and I am sure, it is one of the *first Principles* which the Light of Nature teaches—That the most high GOD must necessarily love Righteousness, and take Pleasure in the Righteous.

Asp. If the Light of Nature was to publish a Gospel, I believe, it would be formed upon your Plan. It would bestow Favour only on the *Innocent*, the *Virtuous*, and the *Holy*. — But the Gospel of *CHRIST* runs in a very different Strain. This brings Pardon for the *Condemned*, and Blessings for the *Accursed*. This is Health to the *Sick*, and Recovery to the *Ruined*. *The LORD hath anointed me*, saith its divine Author, *to preach good Tidings to the Meek*, who are humbled under a Sense of their Unworthiness. — *He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted*, who are wounded with a Conviction of their undone State — *to proclaim Liberty to the Captives*, the wretched Captives of *Satan*; and the *Opening of the Prison to them that are bound*, bound in the Chains of Darkness, Sin, and Misery *.

As I am myself a most unworthy Sinner, You must not be displeased, if I espouse the Cause of those unhappy Creatures. Yet, though a Friend of Sinners, I am no Enemy to the Righteous. I intirely agree with my *Theron* in allowing, that the most High GOD necessarily loves Righteousness. Only I want to be informed, *Where* this admirable and lovely Quality is to be found? — Not among the *Gentiles*. They have swerved from the Dictates of

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natural

* Isaiah lxi. 1;

natural Conscience. — Not among the *Jews*. They have broke the holy Commandment delivered on Mount *Sinai*. — Not among *Christians*. For, if GOD should enter into Judgment with Us, We could not answer Him one of a Thousand. — In the Kingdom of *Æthiopia*, or in the Country of the *Moors*, where will You find the *native Whites*?

The SON of GOD found None among the Race of *Adam*, that were intitled to the Character of Righteous. He who gave Himself a Ransom for All, makes no Application to such Persons *. — Why? Because he sullenly *disesteemed* personal Goodness? Or was unable to *distinguish* the Excellency of inherent Virtue? — No; but because he knew, that, amiable as these Qualifications are, they have no Existence in the human Heart; till the Sinner, reconciled by his Death, be sanctified also by his SPIRIT.

You remember, perhaps, that remarkable Answer, which the *Spartans* once returned to a threatening Embassy, from some of the neighbouring States. Nothing could be more concise; and, I think, nothing was ever more spirited and significant.

Ther. Those Neighbours gave them to understand by their Ambassadors; “That, if they entered their Territories, they would burn their Towns; make the Inhabitants Prisoners; and spread Destruction, where-ever they advanced.” — To which insolent Menace, the brave *Lacedæmonians* made no other Reply, than — IF.

Is this the Story, to which You refer?

Asp.

* Matt. ix. 13. *I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.*

DIALOGUE VI. 265

Asp. The very same. — And when you are speaking of human Righteousness, as the Cause of our Acceptance with the eternal GOD, I would borrow the Language of a *Spartan*. IF, shall be my Reply. — IF, seclusive of the Obedience, and independent on the SPIRIT of *CHRIST*, You can furnish Yourself with this Endowment: Or, if You can carry your Righteousness to that Perfection, which may equal the Purity of the Law, and comport with the Majesty of the Lawgiver: *then* trust in it; let it be the Ground of your Confidence; and seek no better Foundation.

But whoever shall, in this Manner, seek for his Recommendation to the Favour of GOD; will act like the mistaken Countryman in *Horace*: Who, being unable to ford the River, took up a Resolution to wait on the Banks, till the Stream was all run by:

At ille
Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis Ævum.*

Ther. Here, I fancy, We must take Leave of your Countryman. If He adheres to his Resolution, We shall find Him in the very same Situation, when Breakfast is over; and may resume our Subject, just where it is discontinued.

* *Vain Man desist: Such flatt'ring Hopes forego:
It flows, and flows, and will for ever flow.*



DIALOGUE VII.

THE RON.

TO me, who have spent the greatest Part of the Winter in *Town*, these Scenes of the *Country* are inexpressibly pleasing. Take, who will, the gilded Saloon, and the silken Settee; so long as I can shelter myself under the Canopy of such a spreading Beech, and use one of its coarse, misshapen Roots for my Seat.

'Tis true, We see no longer those splendid Brocades, and elegant Toupees, which distinguish the *Park* and the *Mall*.—But we have, full in our View, a Multitude of honest Rustics; pursuing their chearful Labours in yonder *Meadow*. Some, mowing the luxuriant Herbage. Some, raising it into regular Cocks. Others, loading their Waggons with the Hay, or clearing the Ground with their Rakes. The Ground, cleared of its soft Incumbrance, appears fresh and green, like another Spring. While the Exhalations of the tedded Grass, floating in the Air, give

give a rural Perfume to the Gale.—And which, my *Aspasio*, which are the most *valuable* Objects? The *little Labourers* of the Hive, that enrich themselves, and regale their Masters? Or the *gay Flutterers* of the Garden, whose whole Life is nothing but Sport; and their highest Character is, to be insignificantly pretty?

Asp. In this Retirement, We hear none of the wanton and corrupting *Airs* of the *Opera*; no, nor the majestic and ennobling Melody of the *Oratorio**. —But We have a Band of Music, stationed in the Grove; and a Concert of native Harmony, warbling from the Boughs. We are entertained with the Music, which charmed the human Ear, long before *Jubal* found out his Instruments; and thousands of Years before *Handel* composed his Notes.—The Bullfinch, and a Multitude of little tuneful Throats, strike the Key. The Thrush below, and the Sky-Lark responsive from above, *diversify* and *exalt* the Strain. The Black-Bird, somewhat like the solemn Organ, with Notes perfectly mellow, and gracefully sonorous, crowns the Choir. While the Turtle's melancholy Voice, and the murmuring Water's plaintive Tone, *deepen* and *complete* the universal Symphony.

This

* *Majestic* and *ennobling*.—This, I think, is the true Character, and expresses the real Tendency, of the *Oratorio*. Nevertheless, it may not be improper to observe; that if We carry a trifling or irreligious Spirit to the Entertainment; if We attend to the musical *Airs*, but disregard those sacred Truths, which enter into the Composition; it will be little better than a *Profanation* of holy Things. I fear, it will be a Species of *taking GOD's* adorable and glorious Name *in vain*.

—† Gen. iv. 21.

This is the Music, which constituted the first Song of Thanksgiving, and formed the first vocal Praise, that the all-gracious CREATOR received, from his new made World. This is neither the Parent of Effeminacy, nor a Pander for Vice; but refines the Affections, even while it amuses the Imagination.

Ther. All the Entertainments of Nature, are calculated to secure our Innocence, as well as to gratify our Fancy.—And what is another very agreeable Circumstance, these Gratifications which afford the sublimest Pleasure, are exhibited *gratis*. While those, which enervate the Mind, and debauch the Affections, must be *dearly purchased*.—Every one cannot gain Admittance into the Boxes or the Pit, when some celebrated *Tragedy* is brought upon the Stage. But every one may behold the beauteous Exhibitions of *Spring*, and the noble Productions of *Autumn*. All may contemplate the Machinery of Nature, and the Wonders of Creation. Thereby enjoying a far more exquisite Amusement, without any of the Guilt, or any of the Danger.

The Inhabitants of yonder Villages, have never beheld the splendid Procession, which solemnizes the Coronation of a Monarch; nor the *gaudy Illuminations*, which distinguish the Anniversary of his Birth. But they see, almost every Morning, a much nobler Spectacle displayed in the East. They see the great *Ruler* of the *Day*, or rather the Envoy from Day's eternal SOVEREIGN, making his Entry amidst the vast Spaces of the Sky.—The Heavens are strewn with Colours, that outvie the Pinks and Carnations. The Grass is decked with Dew-Drops, and every

Plant is strung, as it were, with Pearls. All around the Darkness flies, and sweet refreshing Gales arise. —At length the magnificent Luminary appears. And what is all the ostentatious Pomp of Kings? What is all the Glitter of the most brilliant Court? Compared with his transcendent Lustre? —This Spectacle we may behold, without Loss of Time, or Prejudice to Health. Nay, We cannot behold it, without *improving* one, and *redeeming* the other. So beneficial are even the Pleasures, which Nature yields! So serviceable the very Diversions, to which she invites!

Ass. Thus gracious is the Almighty MAKER, in the Constitution of material Things. The *Substantial* and the *Valuable*, are open to every One; are accessible by all. Only the *Tinsel* and the *Trappings*, are the Property of a Few; the poor Prerogative of Wealth.

No less gracious is GOD, in the Disposal of *spiritual* Favours. These are infinitely more excellent; and yet are equally free. We are invited to *buy them, without Money, and without Price* *. —What do you give for the Benefits of the rising Sun, or the Delights of this rural Melody? The Case is much the same, with regard to the Righteousness, by which We are justified, and all the Blessings of Salvation.

Ther. This brings to our Remembrance the Countryman, whom we left on the Banks of the River. And, for aught I can see, *Theron* and the Rustic

* Isai. lv. 1.

Rustic are pretty much upon a footing. The first, as far from acceding to your Notions; as the last, is from gaining his Point.

Assp. Have you any Objection, *Theron*, to these Gifts of Nature; because, they are neither purchased by your Money, nor produced by your own Toil?

Ther. But who can ever expect to obtain Pardon, and Acceptance, and eternal Salvation, at so cheap a Rate? It seems to be all Delusion, *Aspasio*.

Assp. So cheap! Then You would pay somewhat, I presume, by way of Price.—But pray, let me ask; What Price did You pay to GOD your MAKER, for fashioning You in your Mother's Womb? What Price have you paid to GOD your PRESERVER, for upholding You ever since You was born? Or what Price do You think of paying to GOD the supreme PROPRIETOR, for the Ground, on which You tread; for the Air, in which You breathe; for the Sun, by which You see? Just the same Price must You advance to GOD your SAVIOUR, for all his justifying Merits.

Both *these* and *those* proceed from the same BENEFACTOR. They are all absolutely necessary, either for the Welfare of the Body, or the Happiness of the Soul. And they are all vouchsafed on the same free Terms. For thus saith the Prophet; *His Going-forth, in the Dispensation of the Gospel, is prepared as the Morning. CHRIST, with all his precious Privileges, shall come unto Us as the Rain; as the latter and former Rain unto the Earth**.—How-

ever,

* Hof. vi. 3.

ever, if You are acquainted with a different, or a better Way, be so good as to communicate your Knowledge.

Ther. Some, You may observe, depend upon their *inoffensive* Behaviour. They live peaceably. They do no Harm to their Neighbours. They are guilty of no gross Offence against GOD. And why should they not hope to obtain his Favour?—They apprehend, the Prophet *Samuel* establishes their Hope, when He makes this solemn Appeal; *Whose Ass have I taken? Whose Ox have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded**?—Nay, they imagine, that our LORD himself has authorized their Expectation, by giving this Character of *Nathaniel*; *An Israelite indeed, in whom is no Guile* †.—A Freedom from outward Injustice and inward Hypocrisy, is all the Qualification, applauded in the one Case, avowed in the other.

Ass. This negative Goodness (if it deserves to be called Goodness) was a Plea for the *boasting Pharisee*. But None, I presume, would choose to be associated with *such* a Companion, either in Character Here, or in Condition Hereafter.

Samuel, in the Place You mention, is vindicating Himself, only to his *Fellow-creatures*, and only in the Capacity of a *Magistrate*. He speaks not of his Justification before the Judge of Quick and Dead. This, He well knew, must be derived from another Source, and must rest upon a firmer Bottom.

The Israelite without Guile, was a Person, who not only abstained from every Sin, but performed every Duty; and without any *wilful Neglect* of the One,
or

* 1 Sam. xii. 3.

† John i. 47.

or any *allowed Indulgence* of the Other. This Instance; therefore, will by no means prove the Sufficiency of your negative Righteousness. Which seems to have just the same Degree of Excellency, as a Fountain that never issues in Water, or as a Cloud that never descends in Rain *.

Ther. In this Particular, *Aspasio*, your Sentiments are mine.—But I would add *Morality* to *Civility*; the *virtuous* to the inoffensive Conversation. And if We not only cease to do Evil, but learn to do well: if we use Temperance, exercise Charity, and keep all the Commandments to the *best of our Power*, is not this a sufficient Foundation for our Hope?

Ass. Yes, *Theron*; if, as you add *Morality* to your *Civility*, you add *Perfection* to both. Otherwise you must be ranked, not among the *Claimants*, but among the *Delinquents*. You have no Title to a Reward, but stand in Need of Pardon.

It is a Principle of Justice, founded on the unalterable Constitution of Things, That the Debtor be acquitted, when He has paid the Debt. But supposing Him, instead of Gold to bring Iron; instead of Talents to return Pence; instead of defraying, to increase the Score daily; can He then reasonably expect, or legally claim a Discharge?

With respect to such an Obedience, We may pass our Verdict in the figurative, but very expressive Language of *Isaiah*: *The Bed is shorter, than that a Man can stretch Himself on it; and the Covering narrower, than that He can wrap Himself in it*†.

Vel Lyra quæ reticet, vel qui non tenditur Arcus.

Claudian.

† *Isai.* xxviii. 20.

It can neither give Rest to the awakened Conscience, nor afford Protection to the guilty Soul. If we have nothing better to plead, We shall not be able to lift up our Heads, in the last decisive Judgment; but *must enter into the Rock, and hide Ourselves in the Dust, for Fear of the LORD, and for the Glory of his Majesty* *.

Ther. We will go a Step farther, and take in the Exercise of *Devotion*. We will read GOD's Word; pray to his DIVINE MAJESTY; and regularly attend on his public Worship.—Here now, are *social Accomplishments* and *moral Virtues*, completed by the Performance of *religious Duties*.

Asp. *Completed!* — I fear, that Expression will scarcely abide the Test of a single Query. Have You then performed all your Duties, with that ardent Love of GOD, and undivided View to his Glory? With that adoring Gratitude to the blessed JESUS, and that child-like Dependence on his SPIRIT? Which the Reason of Things requires, and the Scriptures of Truth enjoin?—If not; your Duties, be they moral, or religious, or both, are far from being complete. Nay; they are utterly defective; and, for that Reason, absolutely insufficient for your Justification. They are *clipped* or *sophisticated* Coin. And will that be *current* in the World of Glory?

Ther. Allowing them to be defective, yet they are *sincere*. And though not free from all *Alloy*, yet if they bear the *Image* and *Supercription* of Integrity, why should they be rejected as *reprobate Silver*? Why should not they obtain the Currency, You mention?

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Asp.

* Isai. ii. 10.

Asp. Alas!—says a judicious and admired Writer, —“ The Imperfections of our best Services
“ daily forfeit the Blessings of Time. How impossi-
“ ble then is it, that the Sincerity of them, amidst
“ so many Frailties and Defects, should purchase
“ the Glories of Eternity !”

Ther. Be your Writer ever so judicious, I can confront Him with Others, equally capable of judging, and diametrically opposite in Opinion.—What says that wise and brave Man, the Successor of *Moses*, and Generalissimo of the Armies of *Israel*? *Joshua*, I am sure, declares Himself on my Side. *Fear the LORD, and serve Him in Sincerity* *, is his last solemn Charge to the People.—Even the great Apostle, on a Review of his Ministry, makes it Matter of Self-gratulation, That He *had his Conversation in godly Sincerity* †.

Asp. You have quoted the Charge, delivered by the *Servant*, be pleased to recollect the Protestation, made by the *Master* : *Not for thy Righteousness, says Moses, or for the Uprightness of thy Heart, dost Thou go to possess their Land* ‡. Even an earthly *Canaan* was not given to the *Israelites*, as the Reward of their own, either outward Obedience, or inward Sincerity. Much less can We expect the Kingdom of Immortality, on Account of any Uprightness of our Intentions, or Piety of our Actions.

However, as the Doctrine of Sincerity is the favourite and the fashionable Tenet, I will conform a little to the Taste in Vogue. You shall have no Reason to complain, That I am either a *Cynic* or a *Stoic*.

* Josh. xxiv. 4.

† 2 Cor. i. 12.

‡ Deut. ix. v.

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Stoic.—Let it suffice Us to be sincere. Only let Us refer Ourselves to the Apostle, for a Description of this darling Qualification. *That Ye may be sincere, being filled with the Fruits of Righteousness, which are by JESUS CHRIST, unto the Praise and Glory of GOD*.*

Here are three Properties of acceptable Sincerity. —It must bear Fruits, *the Fruits of Righteousness*; and bear them *abundantly*, so that We may be filled with them.—The Branch and the Fruits must derive, *that* its Vigour, *these* their Flavour, and both of them their very Being, from the all-supporting, all-supplying Root *CHRIST JESUS*.—Then, instead of terminating in Self-justification, they must redound to the Honour of GOD. It is not said, These shall *justify* You, but these shall *glorify* your FATHER which is in Heaven.

This Kind of Sincerity, can never be too highly esteemed, nor too zealously encouraged. But this, You will observe, flows from the *Grace of CHRIST*, and issues in the *Glory of GOD*. Therefore does but very poorly attest, either the Sufficiency of *human Ability*, to perform good Works; or the Sufficiency of *human Works*, to win the Prize of our High Calling.

Ther. Do You then exclude *all* Works? Will You make a mere Nothing, both of *our* moral Endowments, and of *your* evangelical Obedience?

Ass. They are excluded from all Share in justifying Us. Yet not by me, but by an Authority, to

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which

* Phil. i. 10, 11.

which there can be no Objection, and from which there lies no Appeal. Speaking of Salvation, thus saith the Wisdom of GOD; *Not of Works* —

Ther. Works of the *ceremonial Law*, I suppose. These, we all acknowledge, are, under the *Christian Dispensation*, as a Bond cancelled, or an Act repealed. But sure You will allow a better Office, and a nobler Character, to that Course of Obedience, which is regulated by the Commands of *CHRIST*.

Asp. St. *Paul* will allow it no such Office, as that for which *Theron* is pleading. *Ye are saved*, says the Apostle? *Ye* are delivered from Wrath, reconciled to GOD, and made Heirs of his Kingdom. — How? *By Grace, through Faith**. *Grace*, like a magnificent Sovereign, from the Riches of his own Bounty, and without any Respect to human Worthiness, confers the glorious Gift. *Faith*, like an indigent Petitioner, with an empty Hand, and without any Pretence to personal Desert, receives the heavenly Blessing.

Both *Grace* and *Faith* stand in direct Opposition to *Works*; *all Works* whatever. Whether they be *Works of the Law*, or *Works of the Gospel*; Exercises of the Heart, or Actions of the Life? done while We remain unregenerate, or when We become regenerate; they are, all and every of them, *equally* set aside in this great Affair.

That the Bill of Exclusion is thus *extensive*, or rather quite *unlimited*, appears from the Reason assigned. *Left any Man should boast* †. That all Pre-
tence

* Eph. ii. 8.

† Eph. ii. 9.

tence of Glorifying may be cut off from fallen Creatures. That the whole Honour of obtaining Salvation, may be appropriated to HIM, who *hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting*.—And is He not worthy, unspeakably and infinitely worthy, to receive this *unrivalled* Honour, as a Recompence for his *unparalleled* Humiliation.

Ther. All our good Works, We allow, are recommended by *CHRIST*. They prevail for our Justification, only through his Merits. So that We still depend upon the REDEEMER. And, by this means, pay Him the highest Honour.

Asp. Depend upon the REDEEMER! No, my dear Friend. You rely upon your own pious Acts, and moral Qualifications. They, *they* are your *grand* Recommendation. The Office consigned over to the divine *JESUS*, is nothing more than to be (as it were) *Master of the Ceremonies*. He may have the Credit of *introducing* your fine Accomplishments, with a kind of *graceful* Air.—But is *this* an Office suited to his incomparable Dignity? Was it for *this*, that He bowed the Heavens, and partook of our Nature? Was it for *this*, that He became subject to the Law, and obedient unto Death? *Only* for *this*, that He might usher in our own Endowments, with a Plume and a Scarf?—Surely, *Theron*, You can never entertain such low Thoughts of the incarnate GOD, and of *CHRIST*'s mediatorial Undertaking.

Ther. Neither can I entertain such *low* and *vili-fying* Thoughts, of our own virtuous Attainments. They distinguish Persons of Eminence and Worth, from the sordid Wretch and execrable Villain; just

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as the noble Faculty of Reason, distinguishes the Man from the Brute.

Ass. To deny good Works the Merit of justifying Us, is very different from vilifying them.—You are going to build a new House, *Theron*. Pray, do You intend to fetch your Timber, from the flimsy Tendrils of the Vine?

Ther. No, certainly *.

Ass. Because You don't think its feeble Shoots proper, to form the Beams, and support the Roof, of your intended Edifice: do You, therefore, *affront* them, *depreciate* them, or *disallow* their Usefulness? —By no means. —They may *beautify* your Walls, with their ornamental Spread; and *enrich* the Desert, with their delicious Fruit. This is an Office, suitable to the Nature of the Plant: and from this it receives sufficient Estimation, without pretending to the Honours of the Oak.

Virtuous Attainments, I own, are a considerable Distinction, in the present State of Things. And, what is a higher Encomium (I shall now outshoot You, in your own Bow) they will distinguish the true Believer from the Hypocritical Professor, even at the great Tribunal. —But let them be content with their Province, and not intrude upon the SAVIOUR's Prerogative. To *effect* Justification, be *his*: to *discriminate* the Justified, *theirs*. —Neither let them elate their Possessors, with a vain Conceit of themselves. Who, though they were meek as

Moses,

* *No, certainly.*—Perhaps, it may be worth our while to observe; That this is the Meaning of a very *obsolete* Expression, which occurs in our Translation of (*in order*) *Luke xvii. 9. I trow not.*

Moses, holy as *Samuel*, and wise as *Daniel*, must confide in nothing, but the boundless Mercies of the LORD: must plead nothing, but the infinite Merits of his *CHRIST*.

This, I am sure, is the Theology, both of the *Psalmist*, and of *St. Paul*. They derive the Blessedness promised in Scripture, not from the shallow Stream of human Accomplishments, but from the inexhaustible Ocean of divine Grace. *Blessed is He, whose Unrighteousnesses are forgiven, and whose Sins are covered* *.

Ther. Will *Aspasio* then, like many of our modern Disputants, mutilate the holy Word? Industriously display, what seems to favour his Cause; but artfully secrete, what tends to overthrow his Scheme? How could You forget, or why should You suppress, the following Clause? *And in whose Spirit there is no Guile.* — Was You afraid, it would demolish your Opinion; and point out an *upright, honest* Mind, as the Cause of this Blessedness?

Asp. Far was I, my dear *Theron*, from any such groundless Apprehensions; and equally far from all such delusory Designs. Shall I talk deceitfully for GOD †? His sacred Cause does not need it, and his exalted Majesty would disdain it. No: I would condemn my Tongue to eternal Silence, rather than speak a Syllable, either to conceal, or disguise the Truth.

Most readily We will admit the Sentence You mention: *In whose Spirit there is no Guile.* It is evident from the Context, That these Words are not descriptive of a Person, in whose Heart and Conver-

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sation

* Psal. xxxii. 1. Rom. iv. 7. † Job xiii. 7.

sation there *is* no Iniquity ; but whose Mouth freely *confesses* the Iniquity of them both. Confesses, without any Reserve, or the least Attempt to palliate. — Which, instead of invalidating, corroborates my Argument. Since, according to your own Allegation, the highest Merit consists, in a *free Acknowledgment* of Sin, or a *total Renunciation* of all Worthiness.

Ther. When We join *Repentance* to all our other Works ; lament our Deficiencies, and implore Forgiveness : surely, this must be available with a merciful GOD, and cannot but intitle Us to the Happiness of Heaven.

Asp. How strange does it sound, at least in my Ears, for poor, miserable, guilty Creatures, to talk of intitling themselves to the Happiness of Heaven, by any Deeds of their own ! When it is owing wholly to GOD's rich *forbearing Mercy*, that they are not transmitted to Hell : owing wholly to GOD's free *preventing Grace*, that they are enabled to think a good Thought.

But not to insist upon this Consideration. — I will suppose You, to have lamented your Deficiencies, and implored Forgiveness. Yet still I must say to my Friend, as our LORD replied to the young Gentleman in the Gospel, *One Thing Thou lackest* : a Righteousness, that may magnify the Law, and make it honourable. — Should GOD, without insisting upon this, pardon and reward, He would not act according to his glorious Character ; nor be, at once, *a just GOD, and a SAVIOUR* *. — And if
You

* Isai. xlv. 21.

You can find this Righteousness, *either in the Depth, or in the Height above*; in any Person or any Object, save only in the imputed Obedience of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, I retract whatever I have advanced.

Ther. A Preacher and an Author has lately assured Us, That We are to be “accepted of GOD, and “saved by our own Obedience.” If so, I need not scruple to repeat my Assertion, that our own Duties, especially when accompanied with Repentance, are a *real and proper* Foundation for Life eternal.

Asp. Then the Apostle was under a great Mistake, when, treating of CHRIST and his Merits, He ventured to assert; *Other Foundation can no Man lay, save that which is laid, even JESUS CHRIST**.

Ther. If You will not credit a modern Preacher, I can produce a Decision, made by one of the most antient and authoritative Synods, that ever was convened: *Then hath GOD also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life †.—Repentance unto Life, is their unanimous Voice, and my unexceptionable Voucher.*

Asp. I can easily guess the Assembly, to which You refer. But I can hardly grant it the venerable Name of a Synod. It consisted of some Judaizing Converts. Who adhered, with a tenacious and bigotted Zeal, to the *Mosaic Rites*.—However, though I might scruple my *Theron's* Appellation, I readily acquiesce in *their* Determination.

But it is not said, *Those Gentiles were penitent, and therefore GOD granted them Life.* This should have been the Language of the Assembly, in order to establish my Friend's Way of Thinking. — They were

* 1 Cor. iii. 11.

† Acts xi. 18.

were *dead* in Sin. GOD, of his free Goodness, granted them Repentance. Which is both the Beginning and a substantial Part of *true* Life: even of that Life, which is founded on Justification, is carried on by Sanctification, and completed in Glory.

I would farther observe; That Repentance is a *Turning of the Heart*. And, when it is Repentance unto Life, it is a Turning of the Heart from every other Object, to the great and sole Fountain of Good, *CHRIST JESUS*.—Were Men Slaves to Sensuality? When they repent, they are turned to *CHRIST*, for refined and heavenly Affections. Were they wont to confide in themselves, and their own Works? As soon as they truly repent, they turn to *CHRIST* for a better Righteousness; and, thereby, for everlasting Acceptance with GOD.—In short; they turn from every false Stay, and fly only to *CHRIST*; depend only on *CHRIST*. Looking, not to their own Tears or Humiliation, not to their own Duties or Graces; but *looking for the Mercy of our LORD JESUS CHRIST unto eternal Life*.*

Ther. Suppose, it should be wrong, to expect such a vast Reward, as the inconceivable Glories of Heaven, on Account of our own Duties: Yet, to set them *wholly* aside; to allow them *no* Influence at all; not so much as the *least* Co-operation, in turning the Scale; this is an Excess on the other hand. If the former is *Presumption*, the latter is *Fanaticism*.

Asp. I must confess, I do not thoroughly understand, What You mean by Fanaticism. Neither is it of much Significancy, to enter upon the Disquisition,

* Jude 21.

tion of an obnoxious Term. I would only maintain, That, on Us unworthy Sinners, whatever is bestowed by the righteous GOD, is bestowed, not as a Debt * to our Works, but as the Donation of pure Grace.

Ther. I think, it is sufficiently of Grace; if We acknowledge good Works, to be wrought by the Assistance of the DIVINE SPIRIT; and then admitted, together with our SAVIOUR's Merits, as a Recommendation to the divine Favour.

Ass. The *Pharisee* could make his Acknowledgements for the Assistance of Grace. Yet, this did not exempt Him from the Charge of *Pride*, nor secure Him from the Sin of *Boasting*.—Besides; if good Works are wrought by the Operation of the divine SPIRIT, they draw a Bill upon our Gratitude, not upon the Bank of Heaven. They render Us the *obliged*, not the *deserving* Party. To think or teach otherwise, is errant *Popery* †, however it may lurk under a Veil of *Protestantism*.

What You say, brings to my Mind a memorable Story.—Two Persons were traveling through the Desarts of *Arabia*. The one carried a Musket; the
Other

* Bestowed as a Debt, is, I must confess, somewhat like Jargon. But, perhaps, Jargon and Inconsistency, may not be without their *Propriety* in this Place. As they tend to shew the Genius of *that* Doctrine, which would connect such contradictory Ideas.

† Good Works, says a Champion for the Church of Rome, are *Mercatura Regni cœlestis, the Price We pay for the Kingdom of Heaven*.—Another Zealot of that Communion declares; *Cœlum gratis non accipiam, It shall never be said, that I receive Heaven merely as a Matter of Alms*.—So speaks He! But, blessed be GOD, We have not so learned CHRIST.

Other was armed with a Sword. A *Lion* espies them, and advances fiercely towards them. The foremost discharges his Piece, and wounds the savage Creature. The Wound, neither killing, nor disabling, only enrages the Monster. He seizes the unfortunate Marksman, and is upon the Point to tear Him Limb from Limb. His Companion flies to his Succour; snatches up the Carbine, that dropt from the other's Hand; and fells the ravenous Beast to the Ground. Then, drawing his Sword, stabs him to the Heart, and rescues his Friend.—How, do You think, this Friend repays his Deliverer, when they both return to their native Country?—Truly, He demands Satisfaction for the Loss of his Weapon, which happened to be broke in the Encounter. He commences a Law-suit against that generous Associate, who had put his Life in his Hand, and saved the Prosecutor from the very Jaws of Destruction.

Do You commend the *Equity* of such a Procedure?—It is only a Shadow, the *most faint* Shadow of our excessive Unreasonableness, if We presume to write ourselves Creditors, and the DIVINE BEING Debtor; because, He has delivered us from the Bondage of Corruption, and enabled Us to discharge the Duties of Godliness.

Theron paused; as somewhat struck by the Representation. After a short Interval, *Aspasio* resumed the Discourse.

Believe me, my dear Friend, Salvation, both in the Root and all its Branches, is *intirely* of Grace. Or else believe me, for the many cogent Testimonies of Scripture; which most circumstantially ascertain this great Truth.—*Election* is of Grace: *Having pre-*
destinated

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destinated Us unto the Adoption of Children, not on Account of human Worthiness, but according to the good Pleasure of his Will.*—Equally gratuitous is our effectual Vocation: GOD hath called Us with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his Purpose and Grace †.—Faith is owing to the same Cause: By Grace Ye are saved through Faith ‡.—From hence springs Justification: Being justified freely by his Grace §.—This is the Origin of Regeneration: Of his own Will begat He Us by the Word of Truth ¶.—The Consummation of Bliss flows from the same all-supplying Source: The Gift ¶ of GOD is eternal Life **: It is, in every Respect, a Gift; not only without, but contrary to, all Desert of ours.—So that the Foundation is laid in the Riches of Grace: the Superstructure is reared by the Hand of Grace: and when the Top-stone is brought forth, when our Felicity is completed in the Kingdom of Heaven, the everlasting Acclamation will be, *Grace, Grace unto †† it!*

This

* Eph. i. 5. † 2 Tim. i. 9. ‡ Eph. ii. 8.

§ Rom. iii. 24. *Δωρεαν ἐν αὐτοῦ χάριτι*, One of these Expressions, might have served, to convey the Apostle's Meaning. But, He doubles his Assertion; in order to give Us the fullest Conviction of the Truth, and to impress Us with a Sense of its peculiar Importance: *Freely by his Grace.*—Is it possible to find out a Form of Words, that should more absolutely exclude all Consideration of our own Works and Obedience? Or that should more emphatically ascribe the whole of our Justification to free, uninfluenced, sovereign Goodness?

¶ Jam. i. 18. ¶ Rom. vi. 23.

** *Χαρισμα*. Which is a more expressive Word than *δωρεμα*, and conveys the Idea of freest Favour, Rom. vi. 23.

†† Zech. iv. 7.

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This is that glorious Gospel, which human Learning could never have discovered; which carnal Reason cannot understand; which the Wisdom of this World accounteth Foolishness; which the Envy of the Devil, and the Pride of Man, will always oppose.

Ther. What say You to the Opinion, which *Ouranius* so strenuously maintains? That We are justified, not by the Merits of *CHRIST* imputed to Us, but by *CHRIST* himself formed in our Hearts. And *Ouranius* is none of your proud or carnal People. His Writings are remarkable for their strict Piety, and his Life is as exemplary as his Principles.

Asp. You know, *Theron*, I have nothing to do with the Persons of Men, but with the Truths of the Gospel. *Ouranius*, though eminently devout, may be mistaken. And, if this is his Way of Thinking, He quite misapprehends the Doctrine of Grace.

What is written in the Oracles of Scripture? *The LORD justifieth the Ungodly* *. What is included in the Tenet of *Ouranius*? He justifieth the Holy, the Heavenly, the Christ-like.—*A Man is justified without Works* †, says the Secretary of Heaven. He is justified by Works, says the Pen of *Ouranius*: only let them be Works of a superior Order; such as are internal, spiritual, and wrought by the Operation of *CHRIST* on the Soul.—According to this Notion, every One is justified by his own Love, his own Purity, his own Zeal. Whereas, an unerring Writer has most solemnly declared, That by ONE Man's Obedience Many, many Myriads of Sinners, even all the redeemed World, shall be made righteous ‡.

This

* Rom. iv. 5. † Rom. iii. 29. ‡ Rom. v. 19.

This Notion, I think, is *Legalism* in its greatest Subtily, or highest Refinement. It disannuls the *Merit* of *CHRIST*; it vacates all *Imputation*; and makes our Salvation to consist *wholly* in the Work of Sanctification. Against which, if You remember, I entered my Protest, in one of our first Conferences.— I am justified; my Soul is accepted: not because *CHRIST* has put his Laws in my Mind, but shed his Blood for my Sins: not because I *myself* am enabled to walk in all godly Conversation, but because the *LORD JESUS* has fulfilled all Righteousness as my *Surety*.

Ther. I am for neither of the Extremes. The middle Way is most eligible. This is what sound Sense approves, and the sacred System authorizes. *Who so believeth on me, says our LORD, shall not perish, but shall have everlasting Life* *. *Blessed, adds the beloved Disciple, are they, who do his Commandments; that they may have a Right to the Tree of Life; and may enter in, through the Gates, into the City* †.

Conformably to these Texts of Scripture, I would neither reject our REDEEMER's Merits, nor repudiate good Works. As this shady Tree, and these cooling Breezes, unite their Properties, to render our Situation agreeable; so those two Causes, acting in Conjunction, exalt Us to the Favour of GOD, and constitute Us Heirs of Heaven.—GOD himself has joined them. And I must urge my Remonstrance in our LORD's own Words, *What GOD hath joined together, let not Man put asunder.*

Asp.

* Joh. iii. 15.

† Rev. xxii. 14.

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Asp. Would You then make Impotence itself a Coadjutor with Omnipotence? — Does this humble the Sinner? Does this exalt the SAVIOUR? — No: it is a most injurious Infringement of his mediatorial Dignity. Instead of excluding, it evidently introduces Boasting. In Consequence of such a Scheme, it would be said by the Inhabitants of the heavenly World; “Thanks to our blessed RE-DEEMER for this Happiness! Yet, not to Him only, but to our own Righteousness also.”

Can You imagine, that the Obedience of *CHRIST*, is *insufficient* to accomplish our Justification? Must its Efficacy be reinforced by the Accession of our Works? — And what are these Works of ours? That *they* should inance the Value, the immense Value, of our REDEEMER’S! — *Maimed, tarnished, worm-eaten* Things. Eaten by the Worms of Self-seeking, Self-admiring, Self-love: Tarnished by a thousand Vanities: Maimed by ten thousand Negligencies. — To join *these* in Commision, with our divine MASTER’S Righteousness; would be infinitely more *disgraceful*, than to tack the Beggar’s Rag on the Monarch’s Robe. Would be altogether as *needleless*, as to dream of augmenting the Sea, by the Drops of our Bucket.

Ther. *Worm-eaten!* What Reason have You to represent our Acts of Obedience under this disgraceful Image?

Asp. I thought, You could hardly brook this disparaging Expression. It is somewhat like *petty Treason* against the Dignity of Man. My Reasons I would postpone to some other Opportunity; when, if You please, We will give the Cause a full Hearing.

At

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At present, to make amends for this vile Slander, I will suppose your Works to have *no Defect*; nay, to have *all the Perfection*, which You yourself could wish.—Will You *glory*, on this Account?—You are too modest, I am sure, to avow or patronize such a Practice. Yet, if we say or think, concerning any Attainments of our own, *This is the Ground, on which I expect to escape Condemnation, and inherit Life*; We do, in the most *offensive*, though not in the most *explicit* Manner, glory.

Or, will You reckon, that these Services, because faultless, are meritorious; and authorize You to make a Demand upon the ALMIGHTY? Let Us hear our LORD's Decision in the Case. *When ye have done* not some only, but *all those Things which are commanded You*; say, *We are no better than unprofitable Servants*; *We have done nothing more, than what was our indispensable Duty to do* *. And have, on this Footing, just the same Claim to Honours and Rewards, as the *Negro Slave*, after the Dispatch of his daily Business, has upon the Estate or the Wealth of an *American Planter*.

Ther. But what say You to those Passages of Scripture, which I have quoted. You have given them a Hearing, but no Answer. They, I do insist upon it, expressly *assert*, therefore incontestably *prove*, an *Union* of *CHRIST's* Merit, and our own Works in the Business of Salvation.

Ass. It is written in the Book of *Revelations*, *Blessed are they that do his Commandments*. And wherefore? Because, the Obedience of Faith, is attended with a real Blessedness on Earth; and demonstrates

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our Title, to eternal Blessedness in Heaven. It is, to speak according to St. John's Idea, though not the *Purchase*, yet the *Evidence* of our Right to the Tree of Life.

All this I acknowledge. But where, I beseech You, does the Scripture join the Obedience of *CHRIST* and the Obedience of Man, as mutually *concurring* to justify the Sinner?—The Scripture utterly *disavows* such a Copartnership; and asserts what our Homily expresses: “Surely, there can be no
“ Work of any mortal Man (be He never so holy)
“ that shall be coupled in Merit with *CHRIST*'s
“ most holy Act *.”—It steadily declares, that, in this greatest of Transactions, *CHRIST* is not an Accessary, but the Principal; nay, that He is *ALL*.
Be it known unto You, Men and Brethren, that through this illustrious and exalted Person †, is preached unto You the Forgiveness of Sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all Things. Through this Person; without any Partner or Coadjutor. Which was typified by the High-Priest, when, on the solemn Day of Expiation, He went into the Tabernacle alone, and made the typical Atonement without any Associate ‡. From all Things; by HIM they are wholly, as well as solely justified. Freed from every Charge, whether of Omission or Commission; and rendered, not in part only, but completely acceptable.

I hope

* Homily on Good-Friday.

† Acts xiii. 38. *Δια τούτου*, the Word *Man* is not in the Original. So that I think, this illustrious and exalted Person, is the fullest and most exact Translation.

‡ Levit. xvi. 17.

I hope, therefore, You will no longer consider the glorious *IMMANUEL*, as a *partial* Cause of our Justification.—What would be the Consequence, if a Person should fix one Foot on the Bank of yonder River; and rest another on the fluid Stream?

Ther. He must unavoidably fall.

Ass. And what says our divine Instructor, to those double-minded *Galatians*; who could not believe themselves safe and complete, in the Merits of *CHRIST* alone: but must be seeking some other Foundation, on which to repose a *Share* at least of their Confidence? He says; and they are awful Words; they call for my *Theron's* most serious Regard; *Ye are fallen from Grace* *.

Let me intreat my Friend, to beware of this Error. I think, it is the prevailing Error of our Times; and so much the more *dangerous*, because it is somewhat specious.—To pour Contempt upon the blessed *JESUS* with the *Libertines* and *Deists*, would be shocking to a Mind, that retains the least Reverence for sacred Things. Intirely to set aside the meritorious Efficacy of his Undertaking, with the *Arians* and *Socinians*, would be afflictive to a Conscience, that is impressed with the least Sense of Sin. Whereas, to erect our Merits on the Foundation of *CHRIST's*; to be found in *his*, yet not renounce our own Righteousness; this is both plausible to our Reason, and pleasing to our Vanity. This seems to honour the DIVINE SAVIOUR, even while it gratifies human *Pride*.—But this is an egregious Falshood, and cannot stand. This is an abominable

U 2

Idol;

* Gal. v. 4.

Idol, and must be laid in the Dust. *CHRIST*, like the *real* Mother of the Child, will have the *whole*, or none; the whole—*unshared—undiminished* Glory of our Salvation.

Let me once again intreat my dear *Theron*, to be ware of this Error. It is the main Pillar in the *Romish* Heresy, and the Master-policy of the *Popish* Machiavilians. *CHRIST* *bath* merited, that *We* *may* merit, is their grand Maxim, and their grand Delusion. Hence come their Penances and their Pilgrimages: hence the hypocritical Mortifications of Some, and the extravagant Austerities of Others: this enriches their Shrines, and fills their Cloysters. And to those Seminaries of Superstition, let it be banished, let it be confined.—*There* let them raise their Scaffolding, and try to enlarge the Dimensions of the Sky. *There* let them kindle their Flambeaus, and attempt to increase the Lustre of the Sun. And when they have effected this *easier* Task, then will *We* *Protestants* follow their Example, and adopt their System. Then will *We* also think of adding our own Righteousness, by way of Supplement to our LORD's.

Ther. If *We* are justified wholly by our LORD's Righteousness: if nothing *need* be added, if nothing *can* be added to its all-comprehending Fulness, what becomes of the generally received Opinion, that *CHRIST* obtained for *Us* only a *Possibility* of being saved; or put *Us* into a *Capacity* of acquiring Salvation?

Asp. It will be discountenanced and overthrown; as extremely dishonourable to the REDEEMER, and no less uncomfortable to the Redeemed. When

CHRIST

CHRIST procured our Pardon, and recovered our Title to Life; it was all his own Doing. *Of the People there was none with Him* *. In both Cases his Work was perfect.—Hear his own Testimony: *I have finished the Work, which Thou gavest me to do* †. Should You want an Explication of these Words, I refer You to the Comment of an Apostle. *He, that is JESUS CHRIST, has obtained eternal Redemption for Us* ‡. This was his Work, and it is fully executed. *He has, He has, obtained eternal Redemption*; and left nothing for his People, but to accept the glorious Purchase, and live as becomes the Redeemed of the LORD.

This Truth is written, as with a Sun-beam, in every Page of the Gospel; and sounds, as with a Voice of Thunder, in the Songs of Heaven. *Salvation to our GOD, they cry, that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the LAMB* ||. Those Saints in Glory, ascribe the Whole—the Whole of their Salvation they ascribe, to the Grace of GOD, and to the Blood of the LAMB.

Ther. Have not many of our ablest Divines represented Faith, Obedience, and Repentance, as the Terms of Acceptance? In this Account, there is no Procurement of the Thing itself, but only of easier Conditions, on which it may be obtained.

Asp. The Terms of Acceptance, for fallen and rebellious Man, were, A full Satisfaction to the divine Justice, and a complete Conformity to the divine Law. These, impracticable by Us, were consigned

U 3

over

* *Isal. lxiii. 6.*

† *John xviii. 4.*

‡ *Heb. ix. 12.*

|| *Rev. vii. 10.*

over to *CHRIST*. By Him they were thoroughly accomplished; and by this Accomplishment of them, He purchased for us all Blessings. Among others, He purchased the *Gift* of Faith, the *Grace* of Repentance, and *Ability* to yield thankful, dutiful, evangelical Obedience. These therefore are very improperly called the *Terms*, which are really constituent *Parts* of our Salvation.

To sum up all in a Word—The whole Tenour of Revelation shews, that there are but two Methods, whereby any of the Children of *Adam* can be justified.—Either by a perfect Obedience to the Law, in their own Persons; and then the Reward is of Debt*.—Or else, because the Surety of a better Covenant has satisfied all Demands in their Stead; and then it is a Gift of Grace.—There is no *trimming* or *reconciling* Expedient.—You may choose either of the two; but no third is proposed or allowed.

Ther. Was there not a different Method, for the *antient* People of *GOD*?

Asp. None, *Theron*. In the State of primitive Innocency, a *perfect* and *persevering* Observance of the divine Command, was the Condition of Life and Immortality. When, by the first grand Apostacy, this became impossible; a *free* Pardon, and *gracious* Acceptance, through the blessed *JESUS*, were substituted in its Stead. Which Oeconomy, like a Fountain of Life, was opened; when *GOD* promised the *Seed of the Woman*, to bruise the *Serpent's Head*†.—It ran, like a salutary Rivulet, through the

Ante-

* *Rom.* iv. 4. *Paternal* Debt; founded on the Promise of the Covenant, not springing from any Worth in the Obedience.

† *Gen.* iii. 15.

Antediluvian World—Continued its Progress along the *Patriarchal Age*—Flowed, in broader Streams, under the *Mosaic Dispensation*—Is derived down to Us, abundantly enlarged by the Coming of *CHRIST*, and the Ministry of his *Apostles*—Will be transmitted, with an *increasing Spread*, to the latest Posterity. Nor ever cease to amplify and extend its Influence, till, as the Fountain is become a River, the River is augmented into an Ocean; and *the Knowledge of the LORD* our Righteousness fill the Earth, as the Waters cover the Abysses of the Sea *.

There was, I confess, a Diversity in the *Administration*, but no Difference in the *Nature*, of the Blessing. *JESUS CHRIST*, however variously manifested, was the *same Yesterday*, is the *same to Day*, will be the *same for ever* †. As it is the very same Sun, which *gleams* at early Dawn; which *shines* in the advancing Day; and *glows* at Height of Noon.

My Simile reminds Us of the Time, and leaves a most important Doctrine upon our Memories. Suppose We take the Admonition, and begin to move homeward.

Ther. We need be in no Hurry, *Aspasio*. My Watch tells me, that We have half an Hour good. Besides, I have something farther to alledge, and from a very great Authority, which seems directly contrary to your Notion.

Asp. Just as You please, *Theron*. If You choose to stay, I am all Compliance with your Inclination. And, would Truth permit, I should be all Conformity to your Opinion.

U 4

Ther.

* Isai. xi. 9.

† Heb. xiii. 8.

Ther. You know, Who it is that asks; *What doth the LORD thy GOD require of Thee?* And neither of Us need be informed, What it is, that the Prophet replies; *Do Justice, love Mercy, and walk humbly with thy GOD**. But I want to know, what *You think* of this Passage?

Asp. I think, it is absolutely inconsistent with your Scheme. This Passage inculcates *Humility*. But your Scheme is the very Reverse of that amiable Virtue. *A Self-justiciary* walking humbly with GOD, is little better than a Contradiction in Terms.

The LORD, has said; "Ye shall be saved by Grace†". Your System replies; "No, but by our own Works".—It is declared in Scripture; "That the Gift of GOD is eternal Life". It is implied in my Friend's Doctrine; That this Happiness is the *Wages* of our own Deeds.—"My SON shall have all the Glory of a Sinner's Salvation," is the unalterable Decree of the MOST HIGH. "*We* will have a Share in the Honour," is the Language of your Opinion.—Look, how wide therefore the East is from the West! So remote is such a Strain of Teaching, from the Practice of *walking humbly* with our GOD.

Ther. But consider, good *Aspasio*; have I not the Prophet's Authority for my Opinion? Are not his Words expressly on my Side? Does He not mention

those

* Mic. vi. 8.

† *Eph.* ii. 5. This Text lays the Ax to the very Root of spiritual Pride, and all Self-glorying whatever. Therefore the inspired Writer, foreseeing the Backwardness of Mankind to receive it, yet knowing the absolute Necessity of its Reception, again asserts (*ver.* 8.) the very same Truth, in the very same Words.

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those Duties of Morality and Piety, as the appointed Method of obtaining the divine Favour?

Ans. He mentions, I apprehend, a *solicitous Inquiry*. To which He gives a *satisfactory Answer*. Then subjoins a *practical Improvement* of the Whole.—The Inquiry is expressed in these Words; *Wherewithal shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the High GOD? Shall I come before Him with Burnt-offerings, with Calves of a Year old? Will the LORD be pleased with Thousands of Rams; with ten Thousands of Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my First-born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul?* To which it is replied; *He hath shewed Thee, O Man, what is good for this important Purpose; namely the MESSIAH, pointed out by all thy Sacrifices, and described in the preceding Chapter. Atonement for Sin, and Peace with GOD, are to be made by a better Hand, and in a better Way, than thou proposelt. HE, whose Outgoings have been from of old, from everlasting *; HE, who is the Son of the HIGHEST, and yet the Seed of Her that travaileth†; HE has undertaken, and will fully execute, this great Office.*

And what doth the LORD thy † GOD require of Thee? What Temper, what Conduct, what Expressions

* Mic. v. 2.

† Mic. v. 3.

† *Thy GOD*, is the Phrase. Which denotes an Interest; implies an Appropriation; and is the peculiar Language of the Covenant.—*Thy GOD*; not made so by thy humble Walking, but by an Act of his own Grace, previous to any Obedience of thine.—According to *Theron's* Principles, the Prophet should rather have said, walk humbly (not *with thy GOD*, but) that He may be thy GOD.

pressions of Gratitude, from his People? Who are reconciled through the Blood of *CHRIST*, and admitted to the Blessings of the New Covenant. — They are to testify their Thankfulness, by the Alacrity, Uniformity, and Constancy of their Obedience; or by the conscientious Discharge of every *moral, social, and religious* Duty.

• If this be a true Interpretation of the Text, instead of establishing, it overturns your Cause.—But I have another Objection to your Method, perhaps, more weighty than the foregoing.

Ther. Pray, let me hear it.—I am not so *enamoured* with my Notions, but I can bear to have them censured; nor so *attached* to my Scheme, but I can relinquish it for a better.

Asp. I would illustrate my Meaning, by a common Experiment in Optics. When Objects are viewed in a *concave Speculum*, or in the Hollow of a polished Spoon, how do they appear!

Ther. *Inverted.*

Asp. Such is my Friend's System of Religion. He inverts the Order of the Gospel. He turns the beautiful Building upside down; and lays that for the Foundation, which should only be Part of the *Superstructure*.—Not so the Apostle *Paul*. He, like a wise Master-Builder, places *CHRIST* as the Foundation-Stone; and rears his Edifice of practical Godliness, on that all-supporting Basis.—Examine his Epistle to the *Romans*. Which is unquestionably the completest Model of Doctrine, and the noblest Body of Divinity, extant in the World.

He first discovers the *Depravity* of our Nature, and the Misery of our Condition.—He, then, dis-

plays the Method of our *Recovery* by *CHRIST*, and the Blessings freely vouchsafed in his Gospel.—After which, He delineates the Offices of *Morality*, and inforces them by the most engaging Motives: Motives drawn from the free unbounded Loving-kindness of *GOD* our *SAVIOUR*, and from the rich invaluable Benefits of his Grace*.—*Privilege* He plants as the Root. From which, *Duty* blooms, as the Flower; *Godliness* grows, as the Fruit.

The same Order is observed by *St. Peter*, in his very concise, but very accurate Map, of the Way to Heaven. *Elect*, according to the Fore-knowledge of *GOD* the *FATHER*, through Sanctification of the *SPIRIT*, unto Obedience, and Sprinkling of the Blood of *CHRIST* †.—First, the everlasting and electing Love of the *FATHER*.—Then, the enlightening and renewing Agency of the *SPIRIT*. Who testifies of *CHRIST*, and applies his Death

* This, I think, is the best Platform for an *evangelical* Catechism. The Ruin of Man, occasioned by Sin.—His *Recovery*, effected by *CHRIST*—His *Gratitude*, to be expressed by way of Obedience.—This Plan is carried into Execution by the *Palatinate* Divines. Who have formed upon it, a Summary of catechetical Instruction: than which I have met with nothing of the Kind, more clear and satisfactory; more edifying and animating; more exactly consonant to the benign Spirit of the Gospel, or better calculated to make Mankind both holy and happy.—This Piece the Reader may see, together with a judicious, and very valuable Exposition of it, in the *Latin Works* of *Henricus Altingius*. 1 Vol. Quarto. Which I believe, may be bought for a Trifle, yet are more precious than Gold.

† 1. Pet. i. 2.

to the Soul ; purifying the Heart by Faith.—From whence, as from a Fountain of living Waters, flow true *Sanctification*, and every Species of real Holiness.—All which, being partly defective, and partly polluted, must be sprinkled with the Blood of *JESUS*, and made acceptable by his dying Oblation.

Ther. Is this the *constant* Method, in which the sacred Writers represent the Gospel Salvation ? Do they always observe this particular Order, in arranging its Doctrines and its Duties ? Or, is it not an *insignificant* Circumstance, which goes *first*, provided We take in *both* ?

Asp. To observe this Order, I am persuaded, is no insignificant Circumstance. It is of *great Consequence*, both to our Establishment and to our Growth in Grace. Is it a Matter of Indifference to the Archer, whether He send the Point, or the Feather of his Arrow foremost ? Can He, in either Case, hit the Mark with equal Ease, and equal Certainty ?

I believe, You will find, that the sacred Writers, in all their *evangelical* Discourses, invariably adhere to this Order. Nay ; it took place even under the *legal* Dispensation.—When the LORD GOD published his Law from Mount *Sinai* ; when He wrote it, with his own Finger, on Tables of Stone ; how did He introduce the Precepts ? How inforce their Observance ? — Let Us attend to the Preamble, which is the Language of Love, and the very Spirit of the Gospel : *I am the LORD thy GOD ; who brought Thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage* *. “ I have already delivered Thee, “ with

“ with a mighty Hand, from the most sordid and
 “ insupportable Slavery. I have promised Thee, for
 “ thy Possession, the delightful Country of *Canaan*;
 “ a goodly *Heritage of the Hosts of Nations* *. Nay;
 “ I myself am thy Portion; a GOD in Covenant
 “ with Thee; engaged, by an inviolable Contract,
 “ and with the Exertion of all my Attributes, to do
 “ Thee Good. *Therefore*, keep the Statutes, the
 “ Judgments, and Ordinances, which I am now
 “ going to establish.”—Could there be a more win-
 ning Inducement, or a more indearing Obligation,
 to Obedience?

I might point out the same Strain, running
 through the Exhortations of *Moses*, and the Songs
 of *David*; the Sermons of the Prophets, and the
 Writings of the Apostles. But this I wave, not
 through an Apprehension of its Difficulty, only from
 a Fear of Prolixity.—However, You will not think
 me tedious, if I produce one more Instance, from
 the great Master of our Schools. *For We Ourselves*
were some time foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving
divers Lusts and Pleasures, living in Malice and Envy,
hateful and hating one another *. Here, He sets be-
 fore Us a dismal, but exact Picture, of our depraved
 and undone Condition.—Then He presents Us with a
 delightful View of our Redemption, both in its gra-
 cious Cause, and precious Effects. *But, after that*
the Kindness and Love of GOD our SAVIOUR
toward Man appeared; not by Works of Righteousness,
which We have done, but according to his Mercy, He
saved Us, by the Washing of Regeneration, and
Renewing of the HOLY GHOST; which He
 hath

* Jer. iii. 19.

† Tit. iii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

bath shed on Us abundantly, through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOUR; that being justified by his Grace, We should be made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life.—Having thus provided for our Happiness; He then promotes our Holiness. This is a faithful Saying, and these Things I will that Thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in GOD, might be careful to maintain good Works: these Things are good and profitable unto Men.

I make no Comment * upon the Passage: because I hope, You will commit it, as a noble Depositum, to your Memory. Your own diligent Meditation, accompanied with humble Prayer, will furnish out the best Exposition.—Only I would just remark, that the Apostle, always consistent, always uniform, marshals his Thoughts with his usual Exactness. Good Works are not *disbanded*; nor yet suffered to lead the *Van*;

* Perhaps, the Reader will give me Leave, though *Aspasio* has declined the Office, to add a short *expository* *Stricture*, upon the most distinguished Parts of this very important Paragraph.—I. We have the *Cause* of our Redemption; not *Works of Righteousness, which We have done*, but the *Kindness, the Love, the Mercy of GOD our SAVIOUR*.—II. The *Effects*; which are—1. *Justification; being justified*, having our Sins forgiven, and CHRIST's Righteousness imputed: and this, without any the least deserving Quality in Us; solely by his Grace, and most unmerited Goodness.—2. *Sanctification*; expressed by *The Washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the HOLY GHOST*. Whose Influences purify the Soul, as the Washing of Water cleanses the Body; and introduce an Improvement, into all the Faculties, of the Mind, as eminent and glorious, as the Return of Spring diffuses, over the whole Face of reviving Nature.—III. The *End and Consummation* of all: that We should be made *Heirs* of the heavenly Kingdom; and live, now in the assured Hope, hereafter in the full Enjoyment, of *eternal Life*.

Van; but made to bring up the *Rear* *.—When He mentions these Fruits of the SPIRIT, He mentions them, not slightly, as Matters of small Moment; but earnestly, as Affairs of great Importance. It is his Desire and his Charge, that all Believers should *be careful* †; have their Hearts upon the Business; should use their best Contrivance, and exert their utmost Endeavours—not barely to practice, but to *maintain* ‡; to be exemplary, distinguished, and pre-eminent in the Exercise of every Virtue.—Because, this Virtue, and those Works, though not the Ground of a Reconciliation with GOD, are *amiable* in the Eyes of all, and *honourable* ¶ to the *christian* Profession. They are also a necessary Ingredient in

* The same Order is observed by St. *John*. *Blessed are the Dead, which die in the LORD; for they rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.* Not go before, to open the everlasting Doors, and give them Admittance into the Mansions of Joy. But they *follow* them, when admitted. As the Robe, which, on a King's Coronation-Day, flows from his Shoulders, cannot but accompany Him, wheresoever He goes.—It may be pertinent, on the Mention of this Illustration, just to hint; That, as it is not the *Robe* of State, which *makes* the King; so neither is it the *Practice* of Holiness, which *makes* the Christian. An Union with *CHRIST*, an Interest in his Merits, and the in-dwelling Presence of his SPIRIT; *these*, and nothing short of these, constitute the true Christian. Yet, as the royal Robe is an Attendant on Majesty, and distinguishes the Monarch; so, practical Godliness is inseparable from Faith, and adorns the Believer.

† *Προσμελει*. This is somewhat like that emphatical Expression, which so often occurs in the Old Testament, תשמרו לעשות *Ye shall observe to do*: Ye shall be very diligent to fulfil; Ye shall be very exact in performing.

‡ *Προσκαταδρα* ¶ *Κατα*

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in *personal* Happiness, and the apparent Means of *social* Usefulness *.

Ther. This View of the evangelical Plan is, I confess, new to me; and particularly your Ordinance of the Epistle to the *Romans*.

Asp. If this be *new*, perhaps, what I am going to advance, may be *strange*.—We have been talking about Acceptance with GOD; and debating, whether our own good Works, are the Cause of this inestimable Blessing. What will You say, if We can perform *no* good Work, *till* We are interested in *CHRIST*, and accepted by GOD?

Ther. Say!—That this is razing Foundations.

Asp. It is razing the *wrong*, the Foundation falsely so called. Which will certainly deceive as Many, as make it their Trust.—And is it not *prudent*, when We are building for Eternity, carefully to examine the Ground? Is it not *friendly*, to divert a Man from the treacherous Sand, and lead Him to the unshaken Rock?—For this Cause I said it once, and for this Cause I say it again, That We can perform *no* good Work, *till* We are interested in *CHRIST*, and accepted of GOD.

Ther. Produce your Reasons, *Aspasio*. And strong Reasons they must be, which are forcible enough to support such an Opinion.

Asp. The Case seems to speak for itself. How can a Man that is evil, do Works that are good? Would You expect to gather *Grapes of Thorns*, or *Figs of Thistles*?

Thistles? — But let Us hear, what our unwarring
TEACHER says: *As the Branch cannot bear Fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine; no more can Ye, except Ye abide in me* *. Nothing can be more express and full to our Purpose. But that which follows, is far more awful and alarming to our Consciences. *If a Man abide not in Me, He is cast forth as a Branch, and is withered; and Men gather them, and cast them into the Fire, and they are burned* †. — From which it appears, that the human Heart is never actuated by good Tempers; that the human Life can never be productive of good Works; until a Man is ingrafted into CHRIST. No more than a Branch can bear valuable Fruit, while it continues in a State of Separation from the Tree ‡. — It appears also, that Persons alienated from CHRIST, are, and all their Performances too, like broken, withered, rotten Boughs: fit for nothing, but to be committed to the Flames, and consumed from the Earth. Both they and their Services, far from being meritorious, are in the Estimate of Heaven, worthless and despicably mean.

Ther. What! Are all the noble Deeds, performed by the Advocates for Morality, and Lovers of Virtue,
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* John xv. 4. † John xv. 6.
‡ This discovers an Error, which is often committed, in our Attempts to instruct little Children. What is more common, than to tell them? "If they will be good, GOD Almighty will love and bless them." — Whereas, they should rather be informed, "That they are Sinners: but, that GOD Almighty has given his SON to die for Sinners: and, if they pray to Him, He will forgive their Sins; will make them holy; make them happy; and bless them with all spiritual Blessings in CHRIST."

true, worthless in themselves, and despicable before the SUPREME BEING? Worthless and despicable (grating Words!) *only* because they are not attended with the Peculiarities of your Faith? Can the Want of this *little* Circumstance, change their Nature, and turn their Gold into Dross?

Asp. My dear *Theron*, call not the Circumstances little. It is sufficient, were your Works more precious than Gold, to debase them into Tin, into Lead, into Dross.—When the poor Shepherd brought You, yesterday Morning, a Present of some Wood-Strawberries; bringing them, as an humble Expression of his *Gratitude*, they were kindly received. But, if He had offered them, as a *Price* for your House, or as the *Purchase* of your Estate; how should You have regarded them, in such a Connection? No Words can express the Disdain, You would have conceived.—When *Barnabas* presented a Sum of Money to the Apostles, for the Supply of their own Necessities, and the Relief of indigent Believers*; it was welcome to them, and pleasing to their GOD. But, when *Simon* the Sorcerer, offered his Gold to *Peter* and *John*; offering it, not from a Principle of Faith, but as an Equivalent for the HOLY SPIRIT; not in order to testify his Thankfulness, but rather to play the Huckster with Heaven; it was rejected with the utmost Indignation†.

I leave my Friend to apply the preceding Instances. Only let me beg of Him to believe; that, if my Words are *grating*, they are *extorted* by the Force of Truth. If I am obliged, in any measure, to blame your Works; it is, as a great Critic blames Eloquence, “with the Tenderness of a Lover.”—But

* Acts iv. 37.

† Acts viii. 20.

my Censure falls only on their *faulty Origin*, and *unbecoming Aim*. Let them spring from the Grace of *CHRIST*, as their Source; let them propose the Glory of *CHRIST*, as their End; then, instead of putting a Slight upon them, or giving them a Bill of Divorce, I would court, caress, and wed them. — Whereas, if neither *this* End be kept in the View, nor *that* Principle operate in the Heart; I must persist, in putting a *Query* upon their Character; nay, in denying the very *Possibility* of their Existence. There may be a *Mimickry* of holy Actions. But it is *Mimickry* only; as empty, as the Combs * made by those Wasps; and no better, than a Flame that is painted.

I have an Authority for this Doctrine, which I think, You will not offer to controvert.

Ther. What Authority?

Asp. That of our Church. Who declares, in her XIIIth Article; “ Works done before the Grace “ of *CHRIST*, and Inspiration of his *SPIRIT*, “ are not pleasing to *GOD*; forasmuch as they “ spring not out of Faith in *CHRIST*.”—Faith in *JESUS CHRIST*, purifies the Heart. Till this be done, We have neither Disposition nor Capacity for holy Obedience. Nay, without Faith in *CHRIST*, our Persons are abominable †; our State is damnable; and how can any of our Works be acceptable?

X 2

Such

* *Faciant & Vespæ Favos.*

† *To the Defiled and Unbelieving is nothing clean.* Tit. i. 15. The Apostle joins *Defiled* and *Unbelieving*; to intimate, that without a true Belief nothing is clean. The Understanding and the Conscience are polluted. Both the Man and his Doings are impure.

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Such a One, You say, is honest in his Dealings, temperate in his Enjoyments, charitable to the Poor. I allow it all. But, unless these seeming Virtues are referred to the *Glory* of the Supreme JEHOVAH; unless they flow from *Faith* in the crucified JESUS; they may be Acts of worldly Policy, of selfish Prudence, or Pharisaical Pride. They are by no means a pleasing Oblation to the LORD Almighty *. — Nay; instead of being Acts of Duty, and Objects of Approbation, they stand condemned in the Scripture, and are Breaches of the Commandment. They stand condemned in that Scripture, which declares; *Without Faith it is impossible to please GOD* †. They are Breaches of that Commandment, which requires; *Whether Ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever Ye do, do all to the Glory of GOD* †.

Upon the whole; if We will submit to the Determination of our established Church, or acquiesce in the

* Might not this Observation be made, with great Propriety, in our *infirmary* and other *charitable* Sermons? Should not the Audience be exhorted to abound in Acts of Benevolence, from a *grateful* Regard to the infinitely merciful and condescending JESUS? 2 Cor. viii. 9.— Should they not, before all Things, be directed to *make sure* their Interest in the REDEEMER's Merits? That their Persons may find Favour, and their Alms Acceptance. Eph. i. 6.— Should they not be admonished, that without this *believing* Application to CHRIST, whatever they do, whatever they give, is worthless in the Eye of their MAKER, and will be fruitless to their own Souls? Heb. xi. 6. — In this Respect our SAVIOUR was eminently typified by the *Jewish* Altar. On which *every* Sacrifice, by whomsoever brought, was to be offered. And separate from which *no* Sacrifice, however costly, could be accepted. Exod. xx. 24.

† Heb. xi. 6.

† Cor. x. 31.

the Decision of our divine MASTER; We must acknowledge, that there is no such Thing as a good Work, till We are reconciled to GOD, and our Persons accepted in his Sight. — Therefore, to represent our own Works, as the Means of Reconciliation and Acceptance, is both chimerical and absurd. *Chimerical*, because it builds upon a Phantom, and takes for a Reality, what has no Existence. *Absurd*, because it inverts the natural Order of Things, and would make the Effect antecedent to the Cause.

Ther. Before we quit this agreeable Retreat, let me ask my *Aspasio*; What He *proposes*, by running down all those Works, which are the Produce of inward Religion, and essential to true Holiness. Whose Excellency is displayed in the *clearest*, and whose Necessity is urged in the *strongest* Terms, throughout the whole Bible.

Assp. I am far from running down those Works, which are the Produce of inward Religion; and therefore may be justly stiled, *Works of Faith, and Labours of Love**.—But I would caution Us both to take

X 3

Care,

* *Works of Faith, and Labours of Love.* 1 Theff. i. 3. How finely are good Works characterized, in this Place! Though it be only *en passant*, transiently, or by the by. And how judiciously are the *true* distinguished from the *counterfeit*! Works, that are done in Faith; Works, that proceed from Love; these, and these only, the Apostles signifies, are *really* good.—As some noble River, though pressing forward to the Ocean, nourishes many a fair Plant; and suckles many a sweet Flower, by the Way; so the sacred Writers, though principally intent

Care, least they be destitute of those Circumstances, which alone can render them *truly* good.

I would also persuade my *Theron*, and I would habituate myself, not to repose our *Confidence* in any Works whatsoever. Least they prove a bruised Reed, that breaks under our Weight; or a pointed Spear, that pierces Us to the Heart.—We shall never be like the Church, *Who comes up out of the Wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved**; so long as We bolster up Ourselves, with a Conceit of personal Righteousness. This was the Error, the fatal Error of the *Pharisees*. This the Film, that blinded the Eyes of their Mind; and sealed them up, under the Darkness of final Unbelief.

Besides, my dear *Theron*: If You expect to be saved by your own Duties, You will be loth to see the worst of your Condition. To see the worst of your Condition, will be a *Dagger* to your Hopes; and as *Death* to your Soul. You will therefore be inclined to *daub with untempered Mortar*†. Instead of acknowledging the deep Depravity of your Nature, and the numberless Iniquities of your Life, You will invent a thousand Excuses, to *palliate* your Guilt. And, by this means, erect a *Wall of Partition*, between your Soul and the Merits of your REDEEMER. Which will be a greater Inconvenience, a more destructive Evil, than to cut off all Supply of Provision from an Army, or even to intercept the Sun-beams from visiting the Earth.

Ther.

intent (as here) upon some different Point; yet drop *incidentally* such valuable Truths, as cheer the Believer's Heart, and make glad the City of our GOD.

* Cant. viii. 5.

† Ezek. xiii. 10.

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Ther. Now you talk of Armies, I must observe, that, though I have scarce been able to keep my Ground, in this argumentative Action, I cannot allow You the Honour of a Victory. As a *Retreat* is very different from a *Rout*.

Asp. I would also remark, that my Friend has changed the intended Plan of our Operations. Has almost continually acted upon the *Offensive*. While my Part has been only to sustain the Shock. At our next Encounter, You may expect to have the Order of Battle reversed. I shall direct my Forces to begin the Charge. Put Yourself therefore in Readiness for a *brisk Attack*.

Ther. You act the fair Enemy, *Aspasio*, I must confess; in thus giving the Alarm, before You make the Assault.

Asp. This Hostility may appear fairer still, when I assure You, that my Weapons aim not at the Destruction of your Comfort, or the Demolition of any valuable Interest. Only they would be mighty, through GOD, to pull down the Strong-holds of Unbelief; and bring every self-exalting, every rebellious Thought, captive unto CHRIST*. Captive, in a professed Submission to his Righteousness, as well as a dutiful Subjection to his Commands.—And, when such is the Tendency of the Campaign, it will be your greatest Advantage, to lose the Victory. It will be better than a Triumph, to acknowledge Yourself vanquished.

* 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, 6.



DIALOGUE VIII.

THERON.

UR last Conversation ended with a *Challenge*. To decline or delay the Acceptance of it, would look like Cowardice in me, and be a Piece of Injustice to You, *Aspasio*. Therefore, I am now ready to give You all the Satisfaction, which a Gentleman can demand.—Only as the Weather continues hazy, I believe, my *Study* must be the Place of Action.

Asp. A Challenge! *Theron*—

Ther. What, Sir! Do You boggle? Would You eat your Words, and play the *Poltroon*?

Asp. Perhaps, I may have an Inclination to follow the Example of a *Brother Hero*; who ran away from the Field of Battle, just as his Comrades were advancing to charge the Enemy. And when called to an Account for his Behaviour, right worthily alledged; That his Retreat proceeded, not from any
Timidity

Timidity of Mind ; no, but from a Concern for the public Good. For, quoth He, if I had been knocked on the Head to-day, how should I have been able to fight for my Country to-morrow * ?

You smile, Theron, at my doughty Warrior, and his sage Maxim.—But, since You have glanced at a certain *modish* Custom, give me Leave very seriously to assure You ; That, if the Affair was to be determined by Sword and Pistol, I should reckon such a Conduct, a *resolute* Refusal at least, not at all unmanly, but the *truly* wise and gallant Behaviour. — For surely, it can never be an Instance of Wisdom, to hazard my Life, at the mere Caprice of a turbulent Ruffian; who is a Stranger to all the Principles of Humanity and Generosity, but a Slave, an abandoned Slave, to his own ungovernable Passions. — Surely, it can never be an Act of real Bravery, to expose *my* Person ; because some fool-hardy Practitioner in the Fencing-school, is desperate enough to risk *his*.—The Gentleman, the true Gentleman, should exert a becoming Dignity of Spirit; and scorn to set his Welfare on a Level, with that of an inconsiderate and barbarous Bully †.

Ther.

* Something like this even the grave Demosthenes alleged, in Vindication of his own Conduct; *Ανε ο φευγει η παλιν μαχησεται*. The Man that runs away, may have it in his Power to fight again.

† *Alpasio* calls the Person who gives the Challenge, a Bully. And such, notwithstanding all the Maxims of fantastical and false Honour, He will certainly be found, when tried at the Bar of Reason or Justice. For, if the most impetuous, irrational, and brutal Barbarity is allowed to constitute a Bully, He has an indisputable Title to the Character ; who, on Account of a mere Punctilio,

or

Ther. But Honour, my *Aspasio*, Honour is at stake. Better to lose our Life, than forfeit our Reputation. Better to be in a Grave, than to be the Jest of every Coffee-House; and perhaps pointed at, as We pass the Streets, for mean-spirited, sneaking, or as the Gentlemen of the Sword so elegantly speak, *white-livered* Animals.

Asp. Lose our Reputation, *Theron*! Amongst whom, I beseech You?—A few rash and precipitate Creatures: The Pupils of *La Mancha's* Knight: The Sons of *Chimera* * and Cruelty. Whose Applause is Infamy; and their Detraction the highest Praise they can bestow.—From every judicious and worthy Person, your Conduct will be sure to gain Approbation, and your Character Esteem. When *Cesar* received a Challenge from *Anthony*, to engage Him in single Combat, He very calmly answered the Bearer of the Message; *If Anthony is weary of Life, tell Him, there are other Ways to Death, besides the Point of my Sword.*—Who ever deemed this, an Instance of Cowardice! All Ages have admired it, as the Act of a *discreet* and *gallant* Man; who was sensible of his own Importance, and knew how to treat the petulant and revengeful Humour of a discontented Adversary with its deserved Contempt.

Barely

or some slight Affront, would destroy a Life, that might be of Service to Society—might be a Blessing to various Relatives—and is intimately connected with a blissful or miserable Immortality.

* This Kind of Gentry are filed—in a BOOK, with which they have little or no Acquaintance; but whose Maxims will be had in Reverence, when their Names are lost in Oblivion—*The Sons of Bluster*, or *The Children of Noise.* Jerem. xlviii. 45.

Barely to lose our Life, is the *smallest* of those Evils, which attend this mischievous Practice.—It is pregnant with a long, an almost *endless* Train of disastrous Consequences to Parents, Wives, Children, Friends, Associates, and the Community.—It is an *infallible* Expedient, to be deprived of the Favour of the infinite GOD, and to be excluded from the Joys of his eternal Kingdom.—It is the *sure* Way, to become an Object of Abhorrence to the Angels of Light; and be made the Laughing-stock of Devils, in their Dungeons of Darknes. * *Shame*, everlasting Shame, *shall be* the Reward of such Gallantry, *the Promotion* of such Fools †.

Ther. With regard to this Point, I am intirely of your Opinion, *Aspassio*; however I may differ in others Particulars.

Assp. Say You so, *Theron*! Would You then tamely submit to Affronts, Insults, and Injuries?

Ther.

* “Let me tell You with Confidence,” (says an excellent Person, addressing Himself to one of these unhappy *Desperado*’s) “that all Duels, or single Combats, “are murderous; blanch them over (how You list) “with Names of Honour, and honest Pretences, their “Use is sinful, and their Nature devilish.” See the select Works of Bishop Hall, in one Volume Fol. p. 526. Where the Reader will find a happy Mixture of true Oratory, and sound Divinity; a rich Vein of Fancy, and a sweet Spirit of Piety; Contemplations upon the Histories of Scripture (which, I think, are our Prelate’s Master-Piece) as *entertaining* and *instructive*, as the Subjects illustrated are important and wonderful.—Notwithstanding a few stiff or antique Phrases, I cannot but esteem the Works of this Author, among the most valuable Compositions extant in our Language.

† Prov. iii. 35.

Ther. As to the trifling Affronts of a peevish incontinent Tongue, I would treat *them* with a superior Scorn. And when thus treated, they are sure to recoil, with the keenest Edge, and severest Weight, upon the *impotent* Malice that offers them. The Wretch should see, that I could pity his Misery, and smile at his Folly.—But as to *Injuries*, the Case is otherwise. Should any one offer Violence to my Person, 'tis at his Peril. He would find, and perhaps to his Smart,

*Et Nos Tela Manu, Ferrumque haud debile Dextrâ
Spargimus, et nostro sequitur de Vulnere Sanguis *.*

Here, the fundamental and everlasting Law of *Self-preservation* calls upon Us to play the Man. And I am sure, *Christianity* does not require Us, to yield our Throats to the Knife, or open our Breasts to the Dagger.

But to retire—to deliberate—to sit down—and indite a *formal* Challenge—seems to me altogether as *savage* and *iniquitous*, as to assault on the Highway.—He that demands my Money on the Road, or extorts it by an incendiary Letter, or decoys me into the Snare by a forged and counterfeit Note; is stigmatized for a Villain; is abhorred by every Person of Integrity; and, when detected, is rewarded with a Halter. Why should We reckon the headstrong Bravo *less injurious*? Who makes his Attempt upon my very Life; and thirsts, with insatiable Fury, for my Blood?

Ass. He allows You a fair *Chance*; it is said.

Ther.

* Virgil.

Ther. A Chance ! Of what ?—Either of falling a Sacrifice to his Rage, or of imbruing my Hands in his Blood. Which is neither more nor less, than reducing me to a *Necessity*, of launching into Damnation myself, or of transmitting a Fellow-creature to eternal Vengeance.—And is *this* an Extenuation ? *This* a mitigating Circumstance ? It really proves the Practice so inexcusably wicked, that nothing can be pleaded in its Defence. The very Argument, used to *justify* the horrid Deed, *inflames* and *aggravates* its Malignity.

'Tis Pity, but the *legislative* Authority would interpose, for the Suppression of such a flagrant Wrong to Society, and such a notorious Violation of our benign Religion. Why should not the Laws declare it *Felony*, to make the first Overture for a Duel ? Since it is always more heinous, and frequently more pernicious. Is always Murder in the *Intention*, and frequently issues in *double* Destruction : the One, inflicted by the Stab of Violence ; the Other, executed by the Sword of Justice.

Might it not, at least, be branded with some Mark of *public Infamy*, or subjected to a severe *pecuniary Mulct* ? So that a Gentleman of Spirit and Temper might have it in his Power, to return the Compliment of a challenging Letter with some such Answer ;

S I R,

“ However meanly You may think of your Life,
 “ I set too high a Value upon mine to expose it as
 “ a Mark for *undisciplined* and *outrageous* Passions.—
 “ Neither have I so totally renounced all that is hu-
 “ mane,

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"mane, benevolent, or amiable, as to draw my
 "Sword for your Destruction, because you have first
 "been overcome by precipitate and unreasonable Re-
 "sultment.—You have given me an Opportunity
 "of acting the Gentleman and the Christian, And
 "this Challenge I accept, as a Note under your
 "Hand for five hundred Pounds *; which will very
 "soon be demanded, according to Law, by

S I R,

Your &c.

Asp. But to resume the proper Subject—the Na-
 ture of our Engagement. Which I now recollect,
 and which was explained, when I ventured to give,
 what You call *The Challenge*.—As it is not my *The-*
ron, but the Obstacles of his Faith, and the Enemies
 of his Felicity, that I am to encounter, perhaps I
 shall have Courage to stand my Ground. And, in-
 stead

* Might not the Refuser of a Challenge be dignified
 with some honorary Distinction, resembling the *Civic*
Crown amongst the antient Romans? Since, by his cool
 and temperate Bravery, He saves one Life from the Sword,
 another from the Halter.—Was some honorary Distinc-
 tion, on the one hand, united to a pecuniary Forfeiture
 on the other, I cannot but think, they would prove
 an effectual Method to check the Progress of this destruc-
 tive Evil. It would break the Teeth of Malice with her
 own Weapons, and turn the Artillery of Revenge upon
 Herself. Those detestable Passions would be loth to in-
 dulge themselves in this horrid Manner, if it was made the
 sure Way to ennoble and enrich the Object of their Rage.
 —N. B. The *Civic Crown* was an Ornament assigned to
 those Soldiers, who had in Battle rescued a Fellow-ci-
 tizen from impending Death.

stead of *violating* all the Obligations of Equity, Honour, and Conscience, I shall certainly *evidence* my Love to my Friend; may possibly promote his truest Good.

Ther. I don't see, how this can be effected, by your late Attempt. You undertook to *run down* all Works of Righteousness, as absolutely unable to find Acceptance with GOD, and equally insufficient to recommend Us to his Favour.—It is for the Credit of these, which *Aspasio* has depreciated, that I enter the Lists.

Asp. Pray, what is the *Standard*, to which these Works of Righteousness must be conformed; and by which their Sufficiency may be determined?

Ther. The *moral Law*, doubtless: I know no other Standard of Righteousness, nor any other Way of becoming righteous.

Asp. Agreed, *Theran*. We will join Issue on *this Footing*; and try the Merits of our Cause, before *this Tribunal*. Yourself shall be the Judge. I will only ask your Opinion, and refer myself to your Decision.—You see, I am soon weary of the military Style. I had intruded myself on a Part, which I was not qualified to act; and now resume a more becoming *Character*.

Ther. If You place me on the *Bench*, I shall allow of no such Digressions; but shall keep You close to the Subject.

Asp. Has *your Lordship* then considered the Nature of the divine Law, and the Extent of its Obligations?

Ther. It obliges *all* Persons, and comprizes the *Whole Duty* of Man. It forbids all Immorality,
and

and enjoins every Virtue.—Are not these your Sentiments?

Asp. They are, when somewhat enlarged.—The Empire of the Law, as *prohibitory of Evil*, extends both to the outward and inward Man. It takes Cognizance of the Actions. It judges every Word. All the Operations, and all the Dispositions of the Soul, come under its sacred Jurisdiction.—It is indeed a Discerner, not only of the working Thoughts, but also of the dawning Intentions; and arraigns them both at its awful Bar. *It pierces even to the dividing asunder of the Soul and Spirit* *. Not the inmost Recesses of the Breast, are too deep for its Penetration; nor all the Artifices of the deceitful Heart, too subtle for its Detection.—*Other Laws forbid the unclean Act; this condemns the wanton Eye, and irregular Desire. Other Laws punish the injurious Deed; this passes Sentence on the unguarded Sallies of Passion, and the most secret Emotions of Resentment. So eminently true is that Remark of the Psalmist, Thy Commandments are exceeding broad* †.—Tell me now, *Theron*, has your Obedience been commensurate to this extensive Platform of Duty?

Ther. If the Law be so *very extensive*—

Asp. Nay, my Friend, You cannot suspect, that I have stretched, to an undue Extent, the Obligations of the divine Law. Since this Interpretation is established by an Authority, *too great* to be controverted; *too clear* to be misunderstood; even by the Authority of *CHRIST* Himself. Whose Sermon upon the Mount is a professed Exposition of the Commandments,

* Heb. iv. 20.

† Psal. cxix. 96.

ments, and maintains in the most explicit Manner, all that I have advanced.—So that, if our LORD's Exposition is just, I think, it will be neither rash, nor uncharitable to say, There is not a Man upon Earth, but has *broke them all*.

Ther. Are We all Idolaters then? All Adulterers? All Murderers? Shocking to imagine!

Asp. It is shocking, I confess.—But how much more so, if *such Delinquents* expect Justification by their own Deeds?

Ther. This is no Proof of your Assertion, my good Friend.

Asp. To be fond of Gold; to be enamoured with the World; to love any Creature more than the ever blessed CREATOR; are Instances of *Idolatry*, not quite so gross, but altogether as real, as to set up Idols in our Temples, or pay Acts of Adoration to senseless Images. Have You always been free from this *Apostacy* of the *Affections*?

Our infallible TEACHER has informed Us, That unreasonable Anger, contemptuous Language, and malevolent Wishes, are each a Species of *Murder*; and not many Removes from the Assassin's deadly Stab. Have You been always meek, always benevolent, and never chargeable with this *mental micide*?

We are farther assured, That the Indulgence of inordinate Desire is, in the impartial Estimate of Heaven, as the Commission of the impure Deed. And evil Concupiscence of every Kind violates that sacred Precept, *Thou shalt not covet* *. Has your

V O L. I.

Y

Will

* *Aspasio's* Observation brings to my Remembrance a remarkable Incident; which, as it is quite pertinent to our Purpose,

Will been invariably upright, and warped with no irregular Inclination? Are You wholly unpolluted with this *Adultery* of the Heart?

I wait

Purpose, the Reader will allow me to relate. It passed between a Friend of mine, and a certain ingenious Stranger, into whose Company He happened to fall.—The Gentleman was extolling, at an extravagant Rate, the *Virtue of Honesty*: what a Dignity it imparted to our Nature! How it recommended Us to the SUPREME BEING! He confirmed all by a celebrated Line from Mr. *Pope*,

An honest Man's the noblest Work of GOD.

Sir, replied my Friend, however excellent the *Virtue of Honesty* may be, I fear, there are very few Men in the World, that really possess it.—You surprise me? said the Stranger.—Ignorant as I am of your Character, Sir, I fancy, it would be no difficult Matter, to prove even *You* a dishonest Man.—I defy You.—Will You give me Leave then, to ask You a Question or two; and promise not to be offended?—Ask your Questions, and welcome.—Have you never met with an Opportunity of getting Gain by some *unfair* Means?—The Gentleman paused.—I don't ask, Whether You made *use of*, but whether You have *met* with, such Opportunity? I, for my Part, have; and, I believe, every Body else has.—Very probably I may.—How did You feel Your Mind affected, on such Occasions? Had You *no* secret Desire, not the *least* Inclination, to seize the Advantage that offered? Tell me, without any Evasion, and consistently with the Character You admire; Had You *no* secret Inclination to make use of such Opportunity?—I must acknowledge, I have not always been absolutely free from every irregular *Inclination*, but—Hold, Sir; none of your Salvo's. You have confessed enough. If You had the Desire, though You never proceeded to the Action, this shews You was dishonest in *Heart*. This is what the Scripture calls *Concupiscence*. It defiles the Soul. It is a Breach of that Law, which requires *Truth in the inner Parts*. And, unless You are pardoned through the Blood of *CHRIST*, will be a just Ground of your Condemnation, *when GOD shall judge the Secrets of Men*.

I wait not for a Reply. I have often heard You *plead Guilty* to all—yes, to all and every of these Charges respectively.

Ther. Where, and when, *Aspasio*?

Asp. In the most sacred Place, and on the most solemn Occasion. And not You only, but a whole Multitude of self-condemned Criminals. — Our Church, You know, has ingrafted the Decalogue into her public Service; and taught all her Members to answer, after the Repetition of each Commandment; *L O R D, have Mercy upon Us, and incline our Hearts to keep this Law.* Is not this an Acknowledgment of Disobedience in every Particular? Is not such the *Meaning* of our Response?—"We are verily guilty concerning this Thing. And we humbly implore, both pardoning Mercy for the past, and strengthening Grace for the future."

Give me Leave to urge my Question a little farther,—Is there a *single Day*, in which you have not transgressed, some way or other, this sacred Rule?

Ther. If the Law of GOD will dispense with no Deviation, not even in the first Starts of Thought, or the least Wanderings of Desire.—But surely to affirm this, is to extend the Law beyond all reasonable Bounds. The Motions of evil Desire, *if indulged*, are undoubtedly criminal. But are they also, *when immediately restrained*, Breaches of Duty? I should rather imagine, that such Temptations are thrown in our Way, for the Trial of our Obedience: which, had they no Power over our Affections, *would not be Tryals*; and, when they are resolutely withstood, *cannot be Faults*.

Asp. What was the Judgment of our *Reformers*? And what is the Voice of our *Church*? We may find both in the Ninth Article. “Although there
“ is no Condemnation for them that believe and are
“ baptised, yet the Apostle doth confess, that Con-
“ cupiscence and Lust hath of itself the Nature of
“ Sin.” It is not said, Concupiscence hath *then only*
the Nature of Sin, when it is ripened into Action;
but *of itself*, and before it breaks out into the Com-
mission of Iniquity.

Ther. This I can truly plead in my own Behalf;
That it has not been *customary* with me to offend;
at least, not *presumptuously*, or of deliberate Wicked-
ness.

Asp. My dear *Theron*, do not offer to *palliate* your
Guilt. Such an Opiate may stupify, but will not
cure: or rather, like Opiates ill prepared, it will in-
toxicate the Mind, and counteract the Operation of
every healing Medicine.—Besides, it is not only per-
nicious, but false and unreasonable. You know the
Use of that *solar Microscope*, and are able to inform
me of its Effects.

Ther. I ought to be pretty well acquainted with
these Experiments; since it has long been my fa-
vourite Diversion, to employ a few *spare Hours* in
such agreeable Speculations.

Asp. You have seen the Body of an Insect, accom-
modated to the surprising Instrument. When, in this
Situation, the Animal was pricked by a very fine
Needle; your Eye, your naked Eye, just perceived
the *Puncture*; and discovered, perhaps, a *Speck* of Moi-
sture oozing from the Orifice. But, in what Man-
ner

ner were they represented by the magnifying Instrument?

Ther. The Puncture was widened into a frightful Gash. The Speck of Moisture swelled into a copious Stream; and flowed, like a Torrent, from the gaping Wound. An Ox, under the sacrificing Knife, scarce looks more bulky, or bleeds more largely.

Asp. Don't You apprehend my Design?—If *We*, short-sighted Mortals, and almost blinded with Self-love; if *We* cannot but be sensible of our Faults; how flagrant must they appear, in what enormous Magnitudes, and with what aggravating Circumstances, to an Eye perfectly pure, and infinitely penetrating?

Instead of attempting to extenuate our Offences, let Us make some such improving Reflections.—
 “ If this holy Law, which prohibits the minutest
 “ Failure, form the *Inditement*; if this all-discerning
 “ GOD, who sifts our Conduct even to the smallest
 “ Defect, be the *Judge*; if our personal Goodness,
 “ which abounds with Imperfections, be our *Plea*;
 “ what can *We* expect, at that decisive Hour, when
 “ GOD shall lay Judgment to the Line, and Righteousness to the Plummets*?—Surely, this Consideration should incline Us, to adopt the wise and ardent Wish of the Apostle; *That We may now, in this our Day, win CHRIST; and, at the last tremendous Audit, be found in Him; not having our own Righteousness, which is of the Law, for the Foundation of our Hopes, but the Righteousness which is of GOD, by Faith in JESUS CHRIST†*.”

Y 3

Consider

* Isai. xxviii. 17.

† Phil. iii. 8, 9, 11.

Consider the Law in its nobler Capacity, as *injoining* whatever is *excellent*.—Can You hope, *Theron*, to be justified by it, if You fall short of its Demands, not barely in a *few* Instances, but in *every* Action of your Life, and *every* Temper of your Heart?

Ther. Such a Hope, cherished amidst such Circumstances, would be fallacious and absurd.—But I trust, I am not so *very* faulty, or rather so intirely *abandoned*, as your Interrogatory supposes.

Asp. Have You duly weighed the *Perfection* and *Spirituality* of the divine Law?—It is a Transcript of the unspotted Purity, and absolute Rectitude of the divine Nature. It requires an *unreserved* Obedience to all GOD's Commands, and a most *unfeigned* Submission to all his Dispensations; without regretting the former, as a grievous Yoke; or repining at the latter, as rigorous Treatment.—It calls, not only for external Duty, but also for the most upright Imaginations, and devout Affections.—It insists upon the Exercise of *every* Virtue, and that in the *highest* Degree. Love, without the least Lukewarmness; and Faith, without any Diffidence: a Sanctity of Desire, that knows no Stain; and an Humility of Mind, that is free from all Elatement.—In a Word; it requires Us to be perfect, *even as our FATHER which is in Heaven is perfect* *.

Do any of your Actions come up to this exalted Standard? Are any of your Graces thus refined?

Ther. Am I then absolutely an *Insolvent* before the great LORD of the Universe? Have I no Lamb in

* Matt. v. 48.

in my Fold without a Blemish? Nothing in my Life, nothing in my Heart, but what is defective and defiled?

Ass. Indeed, my Friend, this is not *your* Condition alone, but the Condition of the most irreproachable Person on Earth. There is None perfect, in any Character, or in any Work, no not One. None that obeys the divine Law, uniformly, invariably, and completely.

Cast your Eye upon the *Names*, which are subjoined to those beautiful *Prints*. How elegant is the Engraving! How accurate are the Letters! The Strokes most delicately fine! their Shape most exactly true!—Let me ask You to transcribe them with your Pen; and make the Copy equal to the Original. Preserve all the noble Boldness of the *Roman* Stamp, and all the graceful Softness of the *Italian* Touch.—What? Could You not execute this Task, even in your present *unimpaired* Health, and with the Exertion of all your Skill? How shamefully then must You fall short, if your Eyes were *dim* with Age; if your Hands shook with a *paralytic* Disorder; and your Understanding was oppressed with a *lethargic* Dullness?—Such is really the Case with regard to all the Children of Men. Our Nature is depraved; our moral Abilities are enervated; and our intellectual Faculties clouded. And can We, in such a *State of Impotence*, transcribe that sacred System, which is the very Image of GOD—transcribe it into our Tempers, and render it legible in our Lives, without diminishing one Jot or Tittle of its perfect Purity?

Ther. Though I fall short, there are *Christians* of a much higher Class. *Christians*, I do not doubt, who have these Laws written on their Hearts; all

whose Tempers are cast into this heavenly Mould. Nor am I myself without Hopes of making *more considerable* Advances in Holiness.

Asp. May your Hopes be quickened into vigorous Endeavours ! And your Endeavours be crowned with abundant Success !—What You suppose, concerning very eminent Christians, I cannot wholly admit, neither do I wholly deny. They may have all their Tempers cast into the heavenly Mould : but then, they are conformed to the sacred Pattern, only *in Part*. There is a Resemblance ; yet not such as that clear and steady Mirror (pointing to a fine Glass over the Chimney-piece) exhibits ; but such as some *turbulent* and *muddy* Stream reflects.—If the Breasts of these eminent Christians were formed on the Model of *Drusus's* * House ; I verily think, You would have a lower Opinion of their Acquisitions in Virtue.

David, whom GOD himself dignifies with the most exalted of all Characters, and styles a *Man after his own Heart* † ; who, to a most inflamed Love, added a most accurate Knowledge, of the divine Testimonies ; was deeply sensible of the Truth, I would inculcate. After an attentive Contemplation
of

* When *Drusus*, a noble Roman, was deliberating upon a Model for his new House ; the Architect offered to build it in such a Taste, that no Eye should overlook any of his Rooms.—*You quite mistake my Inclination*, said *Drusus*. *I am for the very Reverse of your Plan. I would have my House so contrived, that every Passenger may see, whatever is transacted within.*

† For the Propriety of this Character, and its Correspondence with the Person, I would refer the Reader to a Note, in *Dialogue I.* p. 26.

of the Sublimity, the Extent, the Sanctity of those heavenly Institutes, He breaks out into this humbling Exclamation; "*Who can tell, how oft He offend-
eth**? Was the most vigilant Conduct, or the
"most purified Soul, examined by this consummate
"Rule; *innumerable* would be found the Slips of the
"former, and *glaring* would the Failures of the lat-
"ter appear."

Ther. I cannot see the Reason, for *degrading* hu-
man Nature, to such an extravagant Degree; and
ranking human Works amongst the *Refuse* of
Things.

Asp. Do You ask the Reason of this Remon-
strance?—It is to preserve Us from the mischievous
Error of the *Pharisee*. Who, measuring Himself,
not by the *true, sublime, and extensive* Sense of the
Law, but by a false, debased, and mutilated Inter-
pretation, became haughty in his own Conceit, and
abominable in the Sight of G O D.—Hear Him
trumpeting his own Praise; *I am no Extortioner, no
Adulterer*†. This, the poor vain Creature fancied,
was a sufficient Obedience, paid to the *second* Table.
See Him still strutting in his own imaginary Plumes‡;

I

* Psal. xix. 12.

† Luke xviii. 11.

‡ This seems to give the genuine Signification of *τις*
υψιστος *αυτουματος*, Luke xvi. 15. Not *that which is high-
ly esteemed, υψιστος, αυτοματος*. The Proposition, taken in this
Sense, is neither necessarily nor universally true. The
Meekness of *Moses*, the Fortitude of *Joshua*, the Wisdom
of *Solomon*, were highly esteemed among those very Men,
to whom our L O R D addressed his Discourse. Yet
None can suppose, that the Endowments of those il-
lustrious Personages, were an *Abomination in the Sight of
G O D*.

Whereas

*I fast twice in the Week ; I give Tythes of all that I possess.** This, He foolishly dreamt, was a due Compliance with the Demands of the first Table.—The young Ruler, seems to have been under the same Delusion, when He had the Assurance to declare ; *All these Things*, which are prescribed by the divine Law, *have I kept from my Youth up to.*

A more pestilent Opinion, it is scarce possible for the Mind of Man to entertain. And nothing can appear more egregiously mistaken, if We consider the vast comprehensive Scope of the sacred Precepts ; and are convinced, that they require an *exact* Conformity, in every Particular, and every Punctilio.

Ther. Is there nothing *valuable*, in Regularity of Conduct, and Integrity of Heart ? Is there no *Excellency*, in our Acts of Charity, and Habits of Virtue ?

Asp. From our *Fellow-creatures* they stand intitled to Respect, Imitation, and Gratitude. But before infinite Perfection, they must drop their Claim, and lie prostrate in the Dust ; imploring Forgiveness, not challenging a Reward.—We all discern a Beauty and

Whereas, whatever is *high and lifted up*, haughty and conceited ; every Sentiment of Self-admiration, and all the Fruits that spring from this bitter Root ; these are *certainly and invariably* Objects of the divine Abhorrence.—This Interpretation, I think, is most suitable, not only to *Fact* in general, but to the *Import* of this Word in particular : See *Rom. xi. 20.* Where it occurs in a similar Acceptation, *μη υψοφρονι.* *Be not high-minded.*—It seems also best to quadrate with the *Tenour* of our SAVIOUR's Reproof ; *Ye are they that justify Yourselves before Men*, but all such arrogant Attempts, and every such elated Air, the most holy GOD beholds with Detestation.

* Luke xviii. 12. † Matt. xix. 20.

a twinkling Lustre in the Stars, when viewed under the Shades of Night. But, when the magnificent Source of Day arises, their Beauty vanishes, their Lustre is Darknefs. Such are human Accomplishments, when compared with the perfect Law, or beheld by the piercing Eye, of the supremely glorious GOD.

Ther. Methinks, this Notion confounds the Difference of Good and Evil; and, by rendering all our Actions *blameable*, would render them all *alike*. This is levelling with a Witnefs!

Asp. It only shews, that there are Blemishes in all. Whereas, Some are Flaw and Blemish all over. Is there no Difference between the *Leopard's* Spots, and the *Æthiopian's* Soot? If I maintain, that neither of them are perfectly white, does this imply, that both are equally black?

I am only alledging, That all We perform, however *specious* it may seem, is very *far short* of our sacred Rule; and therefore cannot procure the divine Favour, or intitle us to the Kingdom of Heaven.— Nay, that if GOD should enter into Judgment with Us, on the Foot of our own Performances; He would discover such Defects, even in the choicest Instances of our Obedience, as would render them Matter of *Condemnation* *, not meritorious of *Applause*.

Be
* To this Assertion St. Cyril, in Concert with several other Fathers, bears a very express Testimony: ΑΥΤΟΙΣ ΝΥΝ ΤΟ ΟΡΘΟΙΣ ΕΡΧΟΜΕΝΟΙΣ ΔΕΧΕΙΝ, ΜΕΛΕΤΑΙ ΝΥ ΑΝΤΙΑΣ ΑΝΩΜΟΝΙΑΣ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΤΙ ΤΩ ΕΠΙΣΤΡΑΦΕΙΝ ΤΙ ΝΥ ΕΛΛΕΙΨΕΤΟ ΘΕΩ. Even those of our Actions, which seem to be performed in a right Manner, could not escape Censure and Blame, if GOD should but slightly examine, or bring them to the Test.

Be pleased to observe this Penknife — What can be more exquisitely *keen*, than the Edge; or more nicely *polished*, than the Blade? But, how do they appear, when beheld through one of those *Microscopes*?

Ther. The Edge less sharp than the Woodman's Ax, or rather more *blunt* than his iron Wedge. The Polish resembles a Mass of *coarse* Metal, rudely hammered on the Anvil.

Asp. How very delicate is the *Cambric*, that forms your Ruffles; and gives such an ornamental Air to your whole Dress! Nothing can be finer, than the Threads; or more exact, than the Texture. But what is their Appearance in a *microscopic* View?

Ther. You would take the fine Threads for *hempen Cords*; and would almost be positive, that they had been *wattled* together, by the clumsy Hands of the Hurdle Maker; rather than curiously wove, in the Artist's Loom.

Asp. That lovely Piece of *Enamel*, which makes a Part of your Lady's penfible Equipage, quite charms the Spectator, with the Justness of its Figure, and the Radiancy of its Colours. But —

Ther. Under the Scrutiny of this searching Instrument, it loses all its Elegance; and instead of winning our Admiration, provokes our Contempt. It looks like a *Heap* of Mortar, *plaistered* on by the Mason's Trowel.

Asp. You see then, *Theron*, what gross Indelicacies, what bungling Inequalities, this supplementary Aid to our Sight discovers, even in the *most finished* Works of human Art. So, and abundantly more, does the immaculate Purity of GOD, discern Im-
perfect-

perfections in our *most upright Deeds, and most guarded Hours.*

I said, *immaculate Purity* — For, GOD is not only unerringly wise to detect, but infinitely pure to abhor, all Contamination. Have You considered this Attribute of the GODHEAD, *Theron?*

Ther. I have; and not without Amazement at the charming, the awful Descriptions, which occur in the sacred Writings.—GOD is not only holy, but, as the Lawgiver of the *Jews* very sublimely expresses Himself, *glorious in Holiness* *. The sacred Penmen, treating of this illustrious Perfection, seem to labour the important Point. They indulge the loftiest Flights of Imagination; they employ the boldest Figures of Speech; and add the most glowing Colours of Eloquence; not without frequent Acknowledgments, that all the *Force* of Language, is abundantly too *feeble*, for the unutterable Subject.

One of the Prophets, addressing the KING eternal, immortal, invisible, breaks out into this extatic Exclamation; O LORD, my GOD, my HOLY ONE, *Thou art of purer Eyes, than (to allow, shall I say? This is an Ascription of Praise, unspeakably too mean for thy surpassing Excellency. Thou art of purer Eyes, than) to look upon Evil, and canst not behold Iniquity* †.—Another, wrapt into a prophetic Vision, sees the *Seraphim* veiling their Faces, in Token of profound Humiliation; hears those Sons of Ardour and Love, crying one to Another; *Holy, Holy,*

* Exod. xv. 11.

† Hab. i. 13.

334 DIALOGUE VIII.

Holy, Holy is the LORD GOD of Sabaoth *.—
Nay, so transcendently holy, says another devout
Worshipper, that all created Glory is totally eclipsed
in his Presence. *He looketh to the Moon, and it shineth*
not ;

* *Isai. vi. 3.* The Poets, and Writers of a bold Imagination, are particularly fond of *Machinery* ; of introducing celestial Beings, in order to give some peculiar Dignity to their Plan, or some additional Strength to their Sentiments. With inimitable Propriety, and surprising Emphasis, is this Species of fine Writing used in Scripture. Especially in the Passage quoted above.

Let us only consider—The *Personages*. These are none other than the Dominions and Principalities of Heaven. Who are placed at the very Top of the Creation ; who excel in Strength and Wisdom, in every high and bright Accomplishment. — Their *Attitude*. They stand before JEHOVAH, who is seated on his exalted Throne. They cover their Faces with their Wings ; as overcome with the insupportable Glories, which beam from uncreated Majesty. — Their *Action*. They celebrate, not in cold Conversation, but in rapturous Songs, the amiable yet tremendous Sanctity of the LORD Almighty. — Their *Manner of Expression*. Though filled and penetrated with the prodigious Theme, they attempt not to describe it. Impracticable that, even by the Tongues of Angels ! They express themselves, therefore, in the Language of profound Admiration ; in repeated, in reiterated Acclamations to the wonderful Attribute ; *Holy ! Holy ! Holy !*—The *Effects* of this august Appearance. The Posts of the Door, shake at the Voice : the ponderous and magnificent Pillars of Brass, (see 2 *Chron. iii. 17.*) tremble like a Leaf. The spacious and beautiful House, is filled with Tokens of the divine Indignation ; is involved in Clouds of Smoke ; and joins with the trembling Columns, and adoring Seraphs, to tell the thoughtless World, *What a fearful Thing it is to fall into the Hands of the living GOD !* The Prophet himself is struck with Astonishment ; is overwhelmed with Awe ; and cries out, “ as a Woman in
“ her

not; yea, the Stars are not pure in his Sight *. And his very Angels, those refined and exalted Intelligencies, He chargeth with Folly †.

Ass. Very majestic Descriptions! — And pray let Us observe the Impressions, which such Beamings of the divine Effulgence made upon the Saints of old. — *Moses*, drawing near the cloudy Pavilion, the Presence-chamber of the HOLY ONE of *Israel*, says with Emotions of uncommon Dread; *I exceedingly fear and quake ‡*! — When *Job* is favoured with some peculiar Manifestations of the omnipotent GOD, see his Posture! Hear his Words! *I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes ||*. How strong is the Language! How deep the Abasement! — When *Isaiah* saw the incomprehensible JEHOVAH, sitting up-

on “her Pangs.” — Can any Thing be more invlivened, impressive, and alarming?

If I shall not trespass upon the Reader's Patience, I would beg Leave to add a Remark, concerning the Word *Sabaoth*: which, though a *Hebrew* Expression, is retained in that excellent Hymn, intitled *Te Deum*; and which some People, I am inclined to believe, inadvertently confound with *Sabbath*. — The latter signifies the Rest of the seventh Day; and, in this Connection, yields a Sense, not very apposite, and comparatively mean. Whereas, the former denotes *Armies* or *Hosts*; and furnishes Us with an Image, truly grand and majestic; worthy to be admitted into the Songs of Seraphs. — It celebrates GOD, as the great, universal, uncontrollable SOVEREIGN: who exercises a *supreme Dominion* over all the Orders of Being, from the loftiest Archangel that shines in Heaven, to the lowest Reptile that crawls in Dust. Who says to a Legion of Cherubs, *Go*; and they go: to a Swarm of Insects, *Come*; and they come: to any, to every Creature, *Do this*; and they do it. See *Matt.* viii. 9.

* *Job* xxv. 5.

† *Job* iv. 18.

‡ *Heb.* xii. 21.

|| *Job.* xlii. 6.

on his Throne; and the Princes of Heaven, adoring at his Footstool; seized with a Pang of reverential Fear, He cried out; *Woe is me! I am undone! For I am a Man of unclean Lips* *! — When Ezekiel beheld an emblematical Representation of HIM, who dwelleth in Light inaccessible: When the ANTI-
TIENT of Days, veiled under a human Shape, appeared to Daniel: though One was a devout Priest, and each was an eminent Prophet; yet, overwhelmed with a Mixture of Veneration and Terror, they both fell down at his Feet as dead †. And this, not before a full Display, but only before a Glimpse of the GODHEAD. Which, though partial and transient, was too dazzlingly bright, for an Eye of Flesh to bear.

O my Friend! my Theron! what Figure must our mean Performances, our low Attainments make, before this immensely glorious GOD? — Let Us observe the Behaviour and Spirit of Job, a little more particularly. He is one of your favourite Examples; and indeed very deservedly. For, in Piety He had no Superior, and no Equal; *there was None like Him in the Earth*. Yet, when He has to do with the MAKER of all Things, and the JUDGE of all Men, He pours out his abashed Soul in these very remarkable Professions: *If I justify Myself, my own Mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse* ‡. — He declares yet farther; *If I wash myself in Snow-water, and make my Hands never so clean, yet shalt Thou, O righteous and eternal GOD, plunge me in the Ditch; manifest me,*
not-

* Isai. vi. 5.

† Ezek. i. 28. Dan. x. 8, 9.

‡ See Job ix. 20, 21—30, 31, 32.

notwithstanding all this Care and Circumspection, to be a guilty and a filthy Creature; yea, so very guilty and filthy, that my *own Clothes*, were they sensible of the Pollution, *could not but abhor me*.

This He confesses, not because He was an habitual Sinner, or chargeable with any scandalous Immorality; but because his Mind was filled with the most affecting Sense, of GOD's inconceivable Holiness, and infinite Glory. *For*, adds the venerable Sufferer, *He is not a Man as I am*; but a BEING of such extensive Knowledge, that nothing can escape his Discernment; of such exalted Purity, that every Spot of Defilement is lothsome in his Sight. *For* which Reason, it is absolutely impossible, *that I should answer Him*, with reference to my own personal Righteousness: *or that We should come together in Judgment*, on any such Footing, without Confusion to myself, and Ruin to my Cause.

To all this He subjoins, what is still more memorable and exemplary: *Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my Soul, I would despise my Life*.—He supposes Himself in a higher State, than your most advanced Christian; though I were *perfect*. Yet, even in such a State, were it attainable, *I would not know my Soul*; not dwell upon, not plead, no, nor so much as cherish a Thought of, my own Accomplishments and Acquirements. In the important Business of Justification, they should stand for Cyphers; they should be thrown into Shades; they should intirely disappear.—Nay more; *I would despise my Life*; my Life, with all its most shining Actions and most distinguished Virtues, should be reckoned insignificant and despicable. Just as *insignificant* and *despicable*,

with respect to this great Transaction, as a wandering Spark would be, if appointed to diffuse Day amidst the Darkness of Night, or produce Spring amidst the Depths of Winter.

Ther. These are really alarming Hints, *Aspasio*.—A Law, which requires an *exact* and *universal* Obedience, both in Heart and Life!—A GOD of such Majesty Purity and Glory, that Men of the most *approved* Integrity, are overwhelmed with *Confusion*, in his Presence!—I shall consider them, at my Leisure, with the Attention they deserve.—At present, I believe, Opportunity is giving Us the Slip. Yonder Coach seems to be moving this Way, and the Livery looks like *Philander's*.

Aspasio, desirous to fix these Convictions—which are of the *last* Consequence to our Faith and Salvation—desirous to fix them on his Friend's Mind, replied.

Asp. As your Visitants are at a Distance, give me Leave to observe; That the wisest of Men, attending to the *first* of these Particulars, has poured Contempt upon all human Excellency; *There is not a just Man upon Earth, that doeth Good, and sinneth not* *. The Apostle of *CHRIST* takes Shame to Himself, on the same Account; and teaches all Mankind, to strike the Sail of Self-Conceit; *In many Things We offend all* †.—*David*, considering the latter of these Points, prays with the utmost Earnestness; *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, O LORD!* And assigns this humbling Reason for his Petition; *For, in thy Sight, shall no Man living be justified* ‡.

This

* Eccles. vii. 20.
clxiii. 2.

† Jam. iii. 2.

‡ Psal.

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This induced *Nehemiah*, who had been so nobly zealous for the Honour of his GOD, not to confide in his own valuable Services, but make Application to forgiving Goodness. *Spare me, O LORD, according to thy great Mercy* *.

Had I set before You the Example of the poor *Publican*, who smote upon his Breast; durst not lift up his Eyes to Heaven; but cried from the Bottom of a polluted Heart, *GOD be merciful to me a Sinner* †! *Self-Love*, might possibly have whispered; “Surely, I am not to be ranked with that abominable Wretch. I stand upon some better Footing, than such an infamous Offender.”—With regard to the Hope of eternal Life, We stand upon no better, upon no other. And when *low* as that obnoxious despised Creature, We are upon the very same Ground with the most *exalted* Saints. They all appear before the MAJESTY of HEAVEN, in the same Attitude of unfeigned Humiliation, and with the same Acknowledgments of utter Unworthiness.—For, it is a certain Truth, and admits of no Exception; That to justify Sinners, is not the Privilege of human Obedience, but the sole Prerogative of the LORD our Righteousness.

Ther. Is not the Practice of *Hezekiah* an Exception to your Rule? These, if I recollect aright, are the Words of that holy King; *I beseech Thee, O LORD, remember how I have walked before Thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy Sight* ‡. You see, He puts the

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Issue

* Neh. xiii. 22. † Luke xviii. 13. ‡ 2 Kings xx. 3.

Issue of his Tryal before the everlasting GOD, upon his own Integrity and his own Obedience.

Asp. These are his Words, but they are not used with *this* View. He humbly represents before the great Sovereign of the World, how beneficial his former Life *had been*, and how serviceable his prolonged Life *might be*, to the best Interests of the *Israelitish* Nation. He pleads his Obedience, not in order to establish a Claim to eternal Happiness in Heaven; but only to obtain a *Reprieve* from the Grave, and a Lengthening of his Tranquillity on *Earth*.—Neither is it gloried in, by way of Merit; but only urged, by way of Argument: As though He had said; “Remember, gracious GOD, how I “ have exerted my royal Authority, to suppress Idolatry, to extirpate Vice, and to promote thy true “ Religion. Consider, how greatly thy People stand “ in need of such a vigilant and zealous Governor; “ and to what a miserable Condition both Church “ and State may be reduced, if Thou takest away “ thy Servant by this threatened but untimely Stroke. “ And, for the Welfare of *Israel*, for the Honour of “ thy Name, for the Support of thy own Worship, “ O spare me a little!”

Aspasio paused; expecting a Reply.—As *Theron* continued silent and musing, *Aspasio*, with a Smile of Benevolence, proceeded.—Come, my *Theron*; why so deep in Thought? Have You any Objection to the Evidences I have produced?—They are some of the most dignified Characters, and illustrious Personages, that could be selected from all Ages: Kings, Princes, and Patriots; Priests, Saints, and Martyrs. Should these be deemed insufficient, I can exhibit a larger and nobler

nobler Cloud of Witnesses—*larger*, for they are a great Multitude, which no Man can number, of all Nations, and Kindreds, and People, and Tongues—*nobler*, for they stand before the Throne, and before the LAMB, clothed with white Robes, and Palms in their Hands.—Ask those shining Armies, Who they are, and Whence they came? Their Answer is comprized in one of my favourite Portions of Scripture: one of those *delightful* Texts, from which I hope to derive Consolation even in my last Moments. For which Reason, You will allow me to repeat it, though it may have been mentioned in a former Conversation. *We are they, who came out of great Tribulation; and have washed our Robes, and made them white in the Blood of the LAMB: therefore are We before the Throne* *.

Some of them laid down their Lives for the Sake of CHRIST; many of them were eminent for Works of Righteousness; all of them were endued with real Holiness. Yet, none of these Qualifications constituted their *Passport* into the Regions of eternal Felicity. They had *washed their Robes*; had fled to the Atonement, and pleaded the Merits, of JESUS their SAVIOUR—Hereby they had *made them white*; this was the Cause of their Acquittance from Guilt, and their complete Justification—And therefore, on this Account, their Persons were accepted; they were presented without Spot before the Throne; and admitted to that Fulness of Joy, which is at GOD's Right-hand for evermore.

Ther.

Ther. I have no Objection to your Witnesses. But, methinks, your Doctrine is strangely *debaſing* to human Nature.

Aſp. A Sign, *Theron*, that it is agreeable to the Genius of the *Gospel*. Which is calculated, as the eloquent *Iſaiah* foretold, to humble the Sinner, and exalt the SAVIOUR*; *The Loftineſs of Man ſhall be bowed down, and the Haughtineſs of Men ſhall be made low, and the LORD alone ſhall be exalted in that Day*†: “Man, though naturally vain, ſhall
“ be made ſenſible of his numberleſs Offences; ſhall
“ ſee the Defects that attend his higheſt Attainments;
“ ſhall confeſs the Impoſſibility of being juſtified by
“ the Deeds of the Law; and place all his Hope
“ upon the propitiatory Death, and meritorious Obedience, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.”

* This correſponds with a very valuable Maxim, which an eminent Divine once recommended to his People, as a *Touchſtone* to diſtinguiſh evangelical Truth.—That Doctrine, he ſaid, which tends

To humble the Sinner;

To exalt the SAVIOUR;

To promote Holineſs;

That Doctrine, which tends to accompliſh all theſe Deſigns, You may embrace as *ſound*. That which is defective in its Influence on any one of them, You ſhould reject as *corrupt*.

† *Iſai.* ii. 11.

The END of the FIRST VOLUME.